LETTERS

1487-ee5

FROM

FELICIA

TO

CHARLOTTE:

CONTAINING

A Series of the moſt intereſting Events, interſperſed with Moral Reflections; chiefly tending to prove, that the *Seeds* of VIRTUE are implanted in the Mind of EVERY Reaſonable Being.

The THIRD EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

Printed for R. BALDWIN at the ROSE in PATER-NOSTER-ROW. 1755.

BRITISH MUSEUM
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FELICIA

TO

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER XXV.

YOU wonder, Madam, at my ſilence; but the continual perſecution of a number of viſitors, has, for ſome time paſt, deprived me of every opportunity of retirement: ſo that, unleſs I could have found in my heart, to have ſent you a letter, with only *Madam*, at the top, *I am married*, a little lower, and *your humble ſervant*, at the bottom, I was, indiſpenſibly, obliged, to

defer writing, till I could find leiſure to be more particular.

My ſtory, Madam, is now finiſh'd; I have been married theſe three weeks; and, from the ſerene tranquil ſtate I am in at preſent, you have no reaſon to expect any more romantic adventures. I have nothing now to do, with the affecting ſcenes of fond diſtreſs, the pangs of jealouſy, or the fears of incurring a father's diſpleaſure. My life begins to move on in an even ſtream, my paſſions are all huſh'd into a ſweet ſerenity: regularity and order, peace and tranquility, have taken up their reſidence in our happy dwelling. Can I give you, my dear friend, a more perfect picture of the higheſt degree of conjugal felicity, or repreſent a happineſs more intenſely charming? 'Tis true, my huſband—O the aukward name!—has no right honourable titles to grace my ſtory, and give a dignity to my newly acquired ſtation; but this is an honour, that I can freely reſign to you, without the leaſt degree of envy; nor will your ladyſhip think me ſtupid, tho' I tell you, that I never, in my life, had an ambition of this kind. Theſe all-potent words, theſe raviſhing ſounds of dignity, theſe pompous ſyllables, ſo full of nameleſs charms, after which ſo many ſigh

and

and languiſh in vain, appear of no moment; and I am as content, with the homely title of Mrs. *Manly*, as any other perſon can be, with the more diſtinguiſhed epithet of *my lady*. But whither am I rambling? Don't you think matrimony has turned my brain? I have been preaching ſo long upon my humility, that I had almoſt forgot, I was to give you an account of my affairs. To return, then, at laſt, to my ſtory.

THE day before I was united to my dear Lucius, by thoſe indiſſoluble bonds, which render our happineſs as ſecure as our lives, his father came to pay us a viſit. We received him with that deference, which is due to ſo near a relation; while his reformation greatly heightened the reſpect my father thought himſelf obliged to pay him. And indeed, whatever follies he had formerly been guilty of, he did not, at this time, want any qualification, to recommend him to the eſteem of a good man; for his ſentiments now ſhewed that he deſerved it. He is really a gentleman of fine ſenſe, of an eaſy agreeable addreſs, and one that perfectly knows the world; nor does he ſeem to have wanted any natural advantage, for making a ſhining figure in it. As all my father's prejudices were now re-

moved, they ſoon grew intimate; and Mr. Manly expreſs'd his acknowledgments, for my father's generoſity to his ſon, with all the gratitude that could be inſpired by the tender overflowings of paternal affection; while my father returned his compliments, with an air of the utmoſt complacency and ſatisfaction. How much does a man of fine ſenſe loſe by his vices! His abilities, which raiſe him above his neighbours, are either entirely ſuſpended, or render him more ingeniouſly infamous, more generally hated and deſpiſed; but he is no ſooner reformed, than, if his reaſon is not impaired, by brutal indulgence, and a continued debauch, (which, alas! is too often the caſe) his new-recovered virtues, poliſhed by repentance, blaze out with a double luſtre, and receive unutterable graces, from the ſudden ſublimity of his conceptions.

Mr. MANLY's acknowledgments were, however, too grave for the preſent ſituation of our affairs, and affected us, as well as himſelf, too much, for us to ſuffer him to proceed. We, therefore, as ſoon as poſſible, gave a turn to this part of the converſation, and Lucius, Melliſont, and Amelia, entering the room immediately after, prevented its being reſumed, and, at the ſame time, recovered that chearfulneſs,

fulneſs, which had been interrupted by this too tender ſubject. The countenances of all our friends had an air of gaity, which broke out into decent mirth; while Amelia, and I, were by far, the dulleſt part of the company. They at laſt retired; when my good friend, attending me to my chamber, and ſeating herſelf by me, How is it with you, Felicia? ſaid ſhe ſmiling; I muſt confeſs my ſelf a ſad fool; for tho' no converſation could poſſibly be more engaging, than that in which we have ſpent the day, I have wiſhed a thouſand times for an opportunity of being alone. Methought, I wanted to indulge, at leiſure, my own thoughts; though, I can aſſure you, they were none of the moſt agreeable. My ſpirits have been ſtrangely oppreſſed, and, notwithſtanding my endeavouring to join in the diſcourſe, I have been every moment at church repeating after the parſon, and thinking what a ſilly aukward figure I ſhall make there tomorrow. Bleſs me! what a coward am I grown! I ſhall certainly behave like a natural. O never mind it, reply'd I, with a malicious pleaſure, at finding her as weak as myſelf; depend upon it, I ſhall keep you in countenance. I am ſo terrified, at the ſolemnity of the ceremony that I heartily wiſh it was o-

ver. I dread it as ſomething mighty formidable, and can hardly think of it without trembling. But ſuppoſe now, added I, we ſhould take the pains to read it over together. Agreed, reply'd ſhe, running into my cloſet and returning immediately with my prayer-book: come, let us begin, added ſhe, it will be more familiar to us to-morrow. Here we began, making our remarks as we proceeded. In ſhort, we read over the whole ceremonial, with the utmoſt attention; which as we lengthened it out, with abundance of comments, and little diſputes upon ſome particulars, which we did not underſtand, took up a conſiderable time.

HAVING now gratified our curioſity, we wiſhed each other a good night, and Amelia left me; but ſhe was hardly out of my room, when returning with a ſmile on her countenance, I am come, ſaid ſhe, to aſk your conſent to let me lie with you. I am perſuaded that we are neither of us in a diſpoſition to give way to ſleep. The hours would paſs on, very heavily, were we alone; let us, then, divert ourſelves as agreeable as we can. With all my heart, my dear, ſaid I, extremely pleas'd with her propoſal: we will indulge our reflections, with the greateſt freedom.

UPON

UPON this, we undreſs'd, and went to bed —But I will not trouble your ladyſhip, with the various topics of our diſcourſe; it is ſufficient to ſay, that we talked till morning, when, ſhaking off the drowſineſs, that then began inſenſibly to ſteal upon us, we aroſe; but had hardly finiſhed the agreeable taſk of dreſſing each other, when ſomebody, rapping ſoftly at the door, Amelia opened it, and our two lovers appeared. They ſaluted us, with an air of tranſport, telling us, that as they had ſeen us at the window, they could not forbear coming to wiſh us joy, on the arrival of this happy morning. This, my dear, ſaid Lucius, is the day, from whence I ſhall date the completion of my happineſs; a day, that, I hope, we ſhall neither of us ever think of without delight. O my Felicia! how happy are you going to make me! Here he gently preſs'd my hand, and gave me a look ſo extremely tender, that I could not help baniſhing every impertinent thought, to ſhare in his tranſport; I even returned the charming preſſure, and ſqueez'd his hand, with a freedom I had never indulged before. Sure, ſaid I, this muſt be a happy union, where both ſo ardently wiſh to promote each others felicity! O my dear! cry'd he, in an extaſy, how

ſhall I merit this ſweet exceſs of goodneſs!

MELLIFONT, I ſuppoſe, was entertaining Amelia, in the ſame paſſionate ſtrain; but I was not at leiſure to attend, either to their words, or behaviour: however, I remember that they both looked extremely pleaſed. We went down to breakfaſt, when Mr. Manly, and my father, join'd, with my aunt, in the moſt affectionate wiſhes, for the continuance of our happineſs; at the ſame time, letting us know, that a coach was ready to carry us, as ſoon as we had drank our chocolate, to a ſmall village, at a few miles diſtance, where a clergyman waited to join our hands.

AT the mention of the coach and clergyman, my uneaſineſs return'd. I trembled, as if afraid of the awful ceremony; while Mellifont, drawing the common prayer out of his pocket, which he had found in my room, and taken up unobſerved, increaſed my diſorder, by ſhewing my father, in what place he found it open upon the table. This was a circumſtance, which created a great deal of mirth amongſt the old people; who, however, unanimouſly agreed, that we could not have ſpent our time better, than in thus ſtudying the nature of thoſe engagments, we were going to enter into; to which my aunt added,

ded, Indeed, I think my niece, and my daughter, ought to be commended, inſtead of being laugh'd at; for, as marriage is one of the moſt important ſteps we can take in life, ſince our happineſs, both in this, and a future ſtate, in a great meaſure, depends upon it; they could not, at this time, have employed their thoughts, on a more intereſting ſubject, than the ſolemn promiſes, by which they are going to bind themſelves.

SEVERAL other things were ſaid upon the ſame ſubject, which took up good part of the time we were at breakfaſt; and we were juſt ready to ſtep into the coach, when Mellifont, to my no ſmall ſatisfaction, propoſed our ſending for the clergyman to perform the ceremony here. Lucius, caſting a glance at me, to ſee if I approved the motion, immediately ſeconded his friend, and, tho' my aunt diſapproved of it, as a thing uncuſtomary in this part of the country, we had the happineſs to carry it againſt her, by my father's joining on our ſide. We, therefore, took our ſeats again, and one of the coaches was ſent away for the reverend gentleman.

I ſhall not attempt, my dear friend, to repeat the chat that filled up this interval. I was in a very odd ſituation; but in leſs than

two hours time, we were informed that the coach was return'd, and, ſoon after, ſaw the divine enter the room, accompanied by Sophronia and Marilla, who had waited for us at church. The glaſs having gone once round, we aroſe, and went into a back parlour facing the garden; I trembling with fear, held by my father's arm, and Amelia by my aunt's; when cuſhions being brought in, the ſolemn ſervice began.——But it would be impertinent for me, minutely, to deſcribe my behaviour on this occaſion, which however, was not altogether ſo ridiculous as I expected; only this I muſt ſay, that I repeated the words, *honour and obey*, as diſtinctly as the reſt: nor did Amelia, any more than I, ſcruple to pronounce thoſe formidable ſounds. My heart readily aſſented to every thing: my whole ſoul was loſt in devotion, and every faculty of it employed in the ſervice.

You find, Madam, I am now entered into the venerable ſtate of wedlock; but, whatever change I have undergone in my manner of life, I do myſelf the honour to aſſure you, that I was never more, than I am at preſent,

YOUR LADYSHIP'S
ſincereſt friend,
FELICIA MANLY.

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR congratulations on our marriage are ſo very obliging, that I can't defer my acknowledgments, without deſerving the imputation of ingratitude, a crime that my ſoul moſt abhors; and, therefore, as I am as ſenſible, as poſſible, of your goodneſs, I embrace this firſt opportunity of telling you ſo. O my friend! what a ſweet addition do your praiſes give, to the ſecret applauſe, with which I regard my happy choice! Lucius is, indeed, worthy of all you have ſaid in his favour; his mind is truly noble, and all his ſoul as much the object of my admiration, as my love.

In my laſt, Madam, I broke off a little abruptly, at the concluſion of that ſolemn ceremony, which initiated me into a different claſs of mortals: but, as I have ſeveral things to relate, which, I flatter myſelf, may ſerve to amuſe and entertain you, I will now reſume the thread of my ſtory.

WHEN all was over, my heart, which had hitherto been extremely oppreſſed, began to beat more freely. Lucius embraced me, and, with eyes fill'd with a melting ſoftneſs, cry'd,

Now,

Now, my dear, I may be ſo happy as to call you my wife. Dear name! may you never think of it, without pleaſure! The reſt of the company embraced us in their turn; and paid us the grateful compliments, which burſt from hearts, ſtruggling under an exceſs of affection, and tender joy. Nor did Lucius's father, who had given away Amelia, appear leſs affected with our common happineſs, than mine. In ſhort, every face glow'd with ſatisfaction, while they ſtrove to outdo each other, in their careſſes and teſtimonies of regard.

We now adjourned to another room, where a ſide-board was ſet with wines and fruit, when my aunt inſiſted upon my drinking a glaſs to raiſe my ſpirits, which Amelia, after my example, complied with. The clergyman, who is one of the moſt facetious gentlemen upon earth, told us abundance of agreeable ſtories, with ſo much humour, that he, frequently, ſet the whole company in a laugh; nor could Amelia, and I, forbear joining in the general mirth. We inſenſibly returned to ourſelves, and, before dinner, were able to bear a part in the converſation. The reverend divine filled his pipe, had a tankard of old october to himſelf, and, by his wit and good temper, let us ſee, that he did not think an innocent

mirth,

mirth, at all inconſiſtent with the ſtricteſt piety. And it is worthy of obſervation, that, notwithſtanding the extraordinary gaity of the gentlemen, not the leaſt word eſcaped them, on this occaſion, that could offend the chaſteſt ear. Lucius and Mellifont were in high ſpirits; but our fathers appeared tranſported above themſelves; they had a peculiar ſatisfaction in their looks, while every geſture and every glance, expreſſed the glad heart of a fond parent. But theſe are things, too delicate to be deſcribed. Sophronia and my aunt had much the ſame elevated joy, which, whenever they endeavoured to expreſs it, ſeemed too big for utterance. What a delightful circumſtance, to think that our happineſs is diffuſed, in ſo charming a manner, to thoſe who are moſt dear to us!

DINNER being over, and the ſervants ordered to withdraw, my father preſented Lucius, with the writings belonging to the greater part of his eſtate. As I have given you the perſon of my daughter, and intruſted her future felicity in your hands, ſaid he, with an air of open confidence, I make no ſcruple of giving you the unlimited poſſeſſion of what is leſs dear to me. It would be an injury to you my ſon, (for now I may have the pleaſure of calling

calling you by this affectionate name) and ſhew me too little moved by your noble and generous ſentiments, ſhould I make you depend on my daughter, for the enjoyment of any of the elegancies of life. I, therefore with the greateſt ſatisfaction, rely on your virtue and prudence, to manage the eſtate, which, as the huſband of my Felicia, you have a right to partake of, in ſuch a manner, as to promote your mutual happineſs. Dear Sir, ſaid Lucius interrupting him, you are pleaſed to oppreſs me with your goodneſs; but, while I would expreſs my grateful acknowledgments, I muſt beg you not to ſtreighten yourſelf, to add— No, no, interrupted my father, in his turn, you need not give yourſelf any pain on my account. I have reſerved, to myſelf, an eaſy competence, ſufficient to ſupport the character I have always borne in life, and to ſupply all the exigencies, incident to the decline of it. A parent, in my opinion, added he ſmiling, ſhould never be ſo profuſe of his wealth, as to deprive himſelf of the capacity of living as he pleaſes without the aſſiſtance of his children; and, indeed, none, that deſerve this indulgence, can be pleaſed with ſeeing ſuch a prepoſterous, ſuch an unnatural dependence. I conſider you both as my children, your intereſts are now become

become inſeparable; and, therefore, I have made no reſerve for my daughter: the convincing proofs I have received, of the greatneſs of your mind, make all ſuch precautions unneceſſary. Nor will Felicia, I am perſuaded, be diſpleaſed that I have given all to you. Why ſo, Sir, interpoſed I? do you really think it no mortification, to refuſe me the pleaſure of doing juſtice to Mr Manly's merit, by giving him ſo conſiderable a proof of my regard, as it would be, to make him a preſent of a fine jointure, as ſoon as I had it in my poſſeſſion? How many agreeable things might I have heard him ſay to me, on this occaſion! But, ſeriouſly added I, I am altogether as well pleaſed as it is; and I aſſure you, you could not have given me greater pleaſure, than you have now done.

THE unexpected vivacity of this reply cauſed a general ſmile; Lucius bowed his head, and ſeemed particularly pleaſed with it; indeed he had reaſon to be ſo. His looks ſhewed that he was charmed with my father's behaviour; for, tho' he had been ſenſible, that he really gained nothing, by this inſtance of his confidence in his integrity and affection to me; yet, as it was an agreeable proof, of the great ſhare he had of his eſteem, it could not fail of giving him the higheſt ſatisfaction. We now joined

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in the warmeſt expreſſions of gratitude to this indulgent parent; whilſt I, much leſs embarraſſed on this occaſion, than this dear man, endeavoured to find terms, capable of expreſſing, in ſome meaſure, the fulneſs of his heart.

My father put an end to our acknowledgments, by turning to my father-in-law, and making him a preſent, anſwerable to the goodneſs of his own diſpoſition. It was a little eſtate of about two hundred a year, which is to return to us, after his and Sophronia's deceaſed and which they did not receive, without thanking him, with tears of gratitude; but in the moment, when they ſeemed labouring under a ſurpriſe, which ſtruck them dumb and rendered them incapable of expreſſing themſelves, Mellifont, who had left us a few minutes before, return'd, and, deſiring to know if we had done with buſineſs, introduced a band of muſic; and, by this means, prevented thoſe affecting acknowledgments' which, however agreeable, are always attended with ſome pain. The day was ſpent in innocent gaity and mirth, and with that peculiar ſatisfaction, which the happy occaſion was adapted to inſpire, among the moſt intimate and cordial friends.

THE

THE next morning, while we were at breakfaſt, my aunt told us, that ſhe expected a viſit from ſome of the neighbouring gentlemen and ladies, to congratulate us on this happy union. Some of them, added ſhe laughing, as they affect to appear men of wit, will, I don't doubt, be fond of diſplaying it in a manner, that will not be very agreeable to the modeſty of, either my niece, or daughter; and, therefore, to ſave their bluſhes for the preſent, ſuppoſe they ſhould take an airing till dinner. I was juſt going to make the ſame propoſal, ſaid my father, tho' from a different reaſon. The day is exceeding fine, and I ſhould be glad of the pleaſure of Mr. Manly's company, without the fear of having our converſation interrupted. Lucius thanked him for the honour he did him, and the coach being ſoon ready, we ſtepped in, leaving Mellifont with Amelia, who promiſed to follow us; we having, before, let them know the road we propoſed to take. My father began the converſation, by the moſt tender expreſſions of his affection. My dear Felicia, ſaid he, how great is my joy, to ſee you ſo happy! You are married to a man of ſenſe and probity; to a man, whom I ſhall love as a ſon, and eſteem as a worthy friend. I wiſh you could

could both know, how happy a father you have made me. Dear Sir, ſaid Lucius, I have not words to expreſs the leaſt part of that gratitude, I feel for your goodneſs. Your happineſs, as it ariſes from ours, ought to encreaſe it too. I love you, as the tender father who gave me being. You are more than a father, you give me happineſs. Here he took hold of my hand, and then looking again at my father; O, Sir, continued he, with a full heart, let me thank you for this, the deareſt of all your gifts!

You are very welcome, reply'd my father, with a ſmile, I hope my daughter will prove herſelf worthy of ſuch a huſband. May God bleſs you both. You are now entered into a new ſcene of life, the very different cares, the different duties of which, require the exerciſe of very different abilities. My dear Lucius, I approve your humanity, that benevolence, which will naturally prompt you, to pity and relieve the diſtreſs'd; but, even this affection, amiable as it is, is one of the moſt dangerous of all that the mind of man is ſenſible to. There are faults, which ariſe, even from goodneſs o heart, faults attended with worſe conſequences, than thoſe of cruelty and brutal ill nature. Pity has ruined thouſands, men, of the

moſt

moſt refined ſenſe, and of the greateſt abilities; and, when theſe are ruined, the ignorant and the ill-natured, proud of an opportunity of revenging the ſuperiority of their acquired endowments, are ſure to treat them with double contempt. And, indeed, men of great humanity, though of the beſt ſenſe, frequently err in the plaineſt caſes; even, where one, but a degree above a natural, would not be deceiv'd. This appears ſtrange, yet it is an obſervation, confirmed by daily experience. Theſe are, frequently, not only the worſt oeconomiſts; but they are drawn into the weakeſt and moſt childiſh engagements, where inevitable ruin is almoſt the natural conſequence. Yet the reaſon of this is, perhaps, not hard to diſcover. Thoſe perſons, whoſe thoughts are taken up with refined ſpeculations, commonly know but little of the world; they may be verſed, indeed, in prudential maxims; but there will always be a vaſt difference between theſe, and truths founded on experience. A man, of an open benevolent diſpoſition, while conſcious of the integrity of his own heart, is leſs inclined to ſuſpicion, than others of more contracted views: he loves to think well of mankind, and frequently thinks better of individuals than they deſerve.

But,

But, when pity has taken poſſeſſion of the heart; pity, a paſſion ſo nearly allied to love, that, like it, it baniſhes from the mind every injurious idea, it is almoſt incapable of ſuſpicion; it reflects not on poſſible conſequences; or, if theſe do ariſe in the mind, they paſs away unregarded, and make too ſlight an impreſſion, to prove effectual. The man of humanity finds it much eaſier to act from paſſion, than from reaſon; he is preſs'd forwards, by the impulſe of a lively imagination, filled with the advantages that will attend the diſtreſſed perſon, on his compliance with his deſires: and, therefore, when he is ſollicited from without, and, at the ſame time, prompted from within, by the impulſes of a generous and affected heart, there is no wonder if he finds a difficulty in ſaying *no*. There are circumſtances, in which a young man will find it extremely hard, to pronounce this little monoſyllable; and, in order to do it, when neceſſary, he will be obliged to practice a great deal of ſelf-denial: but it is a mortification ſometimes abſolutely neceſſary. We have a kind of proverb, which adviſes us "to think "all men rogues, till we find them honeſt."

LUCIUS ſate, all this while, with his eyes fixed on my father, in the utmoſt attention; but,

but, being now unable to contain himſelf any longer, he cry'd out, I dare ſay, Sir, the firſt perſon, who made uſe of this proverb, was a diſhoneſt man himſelf. What a life of ſuſpicion, and diſtruſt! Can he be a friend to mankind? Can he have any complacency in his fellow-creatures, who looks upon them as a neſt of vipers, as villains, who only wait for an opportunity to rob, or impoſe upon him?——

No, cry'd my father, interrupting him in his turn; I did not mention this proverb, by way of approbation, as you would ſoon have found, had you ſuffered me to proceed. For, though it is a ſure way to prevent being impoſed upon, yet it is unjuſt, and conſequently, criminal. It is a much more chriſtian diſpoſition, at leaſt, to believe every man honeſt, till we have reaſon to think him a villain: but, nevertheleſs, if we know the world, we ſhall ſee the neceſſity of riſing every proper precaution to ſecure ourſelves.

Your benevolence, I allow, ought to ſhew itſelf, in real acts of kindneſs; but it ſhould be in ſuch acts, as reaſon and prudence will warrant; a beneficence, generous and diffuſive, and, at the ſame time, conſiſtent with prudence, and the rules of a juſt oeconomy.

Let

Let me perſuade you, to be cautious of ſigning your name: learn, boldly, to refuſe what would be improper for you to grant; and, having once refuſed, let no importunity prevail upon you, to act contrary to your judgment. Never let your ſteward's accounts paſs unexamined, nor ever ſuffer him to diſtreſs a tenant, without ſeeing the poor man yourſelf.

HERE my father pauſed; when Lucius, thanking him for his advice, and the other coach with Mellifont and Amelia, driving up to the ſide of ours, the converſation turned on indifferent ſubjects. It is now time to conclude this long letter. But, I muſt firſt do myſelf the honour to aſſure your ladyſhip, that nothing, but the pleaſure of your company, can add to the felicity of

Your moſt affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

DEAR MADAM,

IN my laſt, if I am not miſtaken, I told you, that my aunt propoſed our taking an airing before dinner, to avoid the impertinence of ſome country gentlemen, whom, it ſeems, ſhe had reaſon to expect; as they had, early in the morning, ſent her word, that they would do themſelves the honour of paying her a viſit, to congratulate Amelia, and me, on our happineſs. Their perſons, tho' not their characters, were unknown to me; and tho' Amelia and her mother had ſeen them before, yet, as they had no acquaintance in the family, we all look'd upon this as an unwelcome intruſion; which, on account of their birth, and fortune, we were obliged to overlook: and they, doubtleſs, imagined us very much honour'd by a viſit, which we would very gladly have diſpenſed with. For my part, the very idea, of being obliged to bear with their impertinence, gave a damp to my ſatisfaction; and, upon my return, I could not help wiſhing, very heartily, that my aunt might be miſtaken; a wiſh that I the more readily indulged, as I did not then know her reaſon for

expecting them. But this was both vain and fruitleſs: for, at ſome diſtance, we could obſerve a number of ſpruce ſervants, in very rich liveries; and, upon our entering the court, our ears were ſaluted, or, rather, ſtunn'd, with a confus'd noiſe, which iſſued from the window of a room adjoining to the hall. One was ſinging with a loud, harſh, and diſagreable voice; while two or three others, all talking at the ſame time, were engaged in a warm diſpute, each ſeeming deſirous to gain a victory, rather by the ſtrength of his lungs, than of his arguments, and to ſtruggle to out-vie the reſt in noiſe. What a jargon was here! Had our ears been entertain'd with the diſmal thrum of the bladder and ſtring, or, had we been welcom'd home, by a concert of catcalls, I could not have formed an idea of a more diſguſting entertainment, than I now expected to receive, from the company of theſe country 'ſquires.

My father frown'd, and Lucius ſeem'd heartily vex'd; but neither of them ſpoke a word. However, the coach no ſooner drove up to the door, than the revel rout ceas'd: and the coach-door being open'd, Lucius leap'd out, and, preſenting his hand, help'd me to alight, in ſpite of half a dozen young rakes, who rudely endeavour'd to puſh before him; and

all

all of whom ſeemed deſirous of doing me this honour. I was next obliged to ſuffer a diſagreable ſalute from each, which the laſt, being already half drunk, render'd, if poſſible, more diſtaſteful, by belching in my face: but it was a ceremony I was forced to ſubmit to, and good manners made me diſguiſe my reluctance: while my father, being entirely unknown, ſtood by, with Lucius, and my aunt, with the appearance of unconcern'd ſpectators.

THIS being perform'd, with as ill a grace as poſſible, and a wretched compliment beſtow'd upon me from each, they all ran, with the ſame familiar air, to the other coach; and Mellifont, having ſet his foot on the ground, to my no ſmall ſurprize, was ſurrounded by two or three of the moſt forward, one of which ſhaking him by the hand, cried, Damn ye, ye ſtrong back'd dog, I wiſh you joy. Nor were the compliments of the others much more polite; they wonder'd where the devil he had been, but could never dream, that he had been poaching. Amelia having, after my example, gone thro' the nauſeous ceremonial, we all went in together; but as we were paſſing thro' the hall, I obſerved one of the moſt diſagreable wretches I ever beheld, a tall, lean, raw, lank, ugly fellow, with a long face

and hollow eyes, dreſs'd in a green frock and laced waiſtcoat, who, ſwinging his arms, ran to Mellifont, and, giving him a luſty blow on the ſhoulder, and at the ſame time ſeizing faſt hold of a button, cry'd "Is that grave ſon of a bitch he?" nodding at Lucius; and then added, Zoons! I have a good mind to make him a cuckold.—Damn me if I have not. Tho' he ſpoke pretty low, Lucius overheard him; and, letting go my hand, ſtept up to him, and immediately ſeizing hold of his noſe, which was none of the ſhorteſt, led him to me, and inſiſted upon his aſking my pardon, which he did, without heſitation; whilſt I, trembling with fear, readily gave him abſolution; when, beſtowing a hearty curſe upon Lucius, and writhing his face into ſeveral ugly contortions, I ſuppoſe to bring his noſe into due form, he turn'd, with a ſilly grin, to his companions, and, with a ſheepiſh air of affected pleaſantry, endeavoured to laugh it off as a joke; tho' he ſaid it was a curſed queer joke, and he hardly knew whether it was in jeſt, or earneſt.

You can hardly conceive, Madam, the terror I was in; for I immediately dreaded, that the reſentment of all his companions would fall upon Lucius, whom I, therefore, apprehended

hended to be in danger: but I was in a moment relieved from my fears; for, to my no ſmall ſurprize and ſatisfaction, they all ſet up a loud laugh, and, clapping their hands, caper'd about the hall with an air of triumphant ſatisfaction; and my father, who had, at firſt, put his hand to his ſword, drew it back with a ſmile.

NOTHING now was heard but applauſes on Lucius, who was regarded as a hero, and the repetition of I—, I—, I—, from two or three running about, and mimicking the look, geſture, and ſnuffle of their companion, while Lucius led him by the noſe; a kind of wit, which, as it was perfectly agreable to their talents, ſeem'd to give them the higheſt delight.

As ſoon as they were conducted to another room, we ſtepp'd into the parlour, which they had left upon our return home, the floor of which was pretty well ſtrew'd with broken glaſſes; when my father obſerv'd to Lucius, that, if theſe were his friend's companions, he could not help forming a very bad opinion, both of his taſte and morals. Whether Lucius would have vindicated Mellifont, or not, I can't tell; for my father had no ſooner made this remark, than he himſelf enter'd the room, and, advancing to Amelia, who had ſtay'd with

us, I have left, ſaid he this ſtupid rabble of baronets and 'ſquires to themſelves; a parcel of familiar puppies! who, becauſe I had, ſome time ago, the misfortune to blunder into their company, muſt pretend to rank me in the number of their acquaintance, and, as ſuch, to pay me this viſit. Pray, who are they? what are they? cry'd my father, with a peeviſh haſtineſs, that ſtrongly expreſs'd his diſlike. They are, Sir, ſaid he, gentlemen of different diſpoſitions, united together, only, by a common taſte for a favourite diverſion. Some of them are fond of the cockpit; others are fox-hunters; but all of them keep running horſes: and, poſitively, by the ruſticity of their behaviour, one would imagine that they had their education in the ſtable, and, indeed, for aught I know, the groom may be the better gentleman. But, as they have moſt of them very conſiderable eſtates, they imagine, that they have a licence, to trouble whom they pleaſe with their impertinence. The ladies, I expect, will have a terrible entertainment at dinner. I am afraid ſo, ſaid Amelia, and I heartily wiſh them gone. If we could but ſhut our ears, as eaſily as our eyes, cry'd I, I ſhould eſteem it now an happineſs. Gentlemen, 'ſquires, baronets! ſaid my father, with a ſneer;

a ſneer; fools, blockheads, ignorant ſtupid raſcals; they know no higher ſatisfaction than a horſe-laugh. Well, well, return'd Mellifont, very gravely, but you muſt not form an idea of our country gentlemen from theſe; many of whom would be aſhamed of being ſeen in their company, as I aſſure you, I am. There are, amongſt us, men of ſenſe, agreeable companions, and, here and there, is ſcattered a man of humanity.

THIS converſation was interrupted, by our being informed, that dinner was ready; on which we went to the dining-room, and, after our making an apology for our abſence, took our ſeats at the table.

HORSES were the ſubject we found them upon, when we enter'd the room; and this topic laſted all the time we were at dinner. Nay, ſo ſtrictly did they adhere to it, that their very jeſts had a ſmack of the groom, mingled with an indecency the moſt ſhocking and diſtaſteful, and too coarſe and indelicate, even to deſerve the name of a double entendre. Amelia and I were toaſted under the name of pretty fillies, which no ſooner went round, than one drank health to the riders, and this produced a loud laugh of applauſe; and, in the courſe of going round, pick'd up an addi-

tional piece of obſcenity from every one of theſe gentlemen, who, emulous of exceeding in this way, conſtantly produced a freſh laugh, and a ſtare in our faces. Amelia and I were in a ſituation worthy of pity; we bluſh'd, hung down our heads, and, I ſpeak for myſelf, I was ready to ſink with ſhame. At laſt ſomebody aſk'd Lucius if I was a good pacer. Ay, damm'e, and needs neither whip nor ſpur, cried another. All eyes were again fix'd on me; and thus the ſuppos'd wit was bandied about, collecting freſh mire from every kick. But whenever the man, who had given us the affront in the hall, began to ſpeak; for he ſeem'd very deſirous of adding his quota; Mellifont ſtopp'd him ſhort, by ſnuffling out I—, I—, I—, and giving him a hint, that if he had not yet enough, he would lead him another turn. This kept him ſilent, and afforded us ſome ſmall relief.

AT laſt ſomething was ſaid, which I had the happineſs not to underſtand; it was addreſs'd to Mellifont, and was ſomething about jumping—no, leaping, was the word; but, it ſeems, it was very groſs; for Lucius, who had ſeveral times before began to ſpeak, but was interrupted and borne down by ſome ſtupid ribaldry, ſeem'd now reſolved to break thro' all

all oppoſition; and, therefore, raiſing his voice louder than common, Pray, gentlemen, ſaid he, what have theſe ladies done, that they ſhould be ſhocked with ſuch poor, wretched obſcenity? Is there any merit in putting a lady to the bluſh?—It is cowardly, mean, and ſcandalous; below the dignity of a gentleman.—A gentleman! did I ſay?—below the dignity of a man.—Cowardly! cry'd one of the moſt forward, interrupting him with a haughty air, and frowning ſteady look; pray who do you call coward? Faith, I won't be led by the noſe.——Yes, cowardly, cry'd Lucius, raiſing his voice ſtill higher, and ſpeaking with equal ſternneſs,—ay, cowardly.—Cowardly, echo'd my father, and Mellifont, at the ſame time. I repeat it again, continued Lucius, with a firmneſs and reſolution that charm'd me, it is cowardly, an inſult on decency: it is affronting the ladies in the tendereſt part; and, however authoriſed by brutal cuſtom, on theſe occaſions, it is an inſult on nature—the moſt barbarous inſult, thus to diſcolour the cheek of conſcious innocence.——Pox! cry'd a youth of about eighteen, who ſeem'd, by his ignorance and his dialect, never to have been twenty miles from home; he weant let us be witty: I'll be curſt, if ever I was ſo witty in aw my

life. The women ſhould no' be ſheamfac'd, it is time that was o'er, or the devil's in't. I ha' ſaid more behauf before my own mother at wom, and ſhu loff'd as thof ſhu would ha' be——Witty! cry'd my father, interrupting him with a ſneer; let us ſee that you have common ſenſe, young man, before you affect to be witty. Common ſenſe! ſaid Mellifont with a ſatirical laugh: Common ſenſe is a lady, that very few here are acquainted with, I can tell you that: why, common ſenſe is no common woman; and, therefore, ſhe is as much ſhunn'd, by theſe, as a common woman by a man, who has any ſenſe at all.—And, as to my lady Decency, they don't even know her, when they ſee her. If they did, it might be poſſible to make them bluſh. Mellifont had laid down his knife and fork at the beginning of this ſpeech, and now, leaning back in his chair, and holding up his hands in a ſupplicating poſture, he immediately added, with an arch look, that had a mixture of the ſerious and comical,

"*Hail, Decency! celeſtial maid!*
"*Deſcend from heav'n to Beauty's aid,*"
And bleſt the wretch that's not afraid
To affront thee.

THE humourous manner of his introducing the

the two firſt lines from Swift, and his adding the laſt, without the leaſt heſitation, gave us an agreeable ſurpriſe, and made my father and Lucius ſmile, for the firſt time ſince they had been at table. And, indeed, their obſtinately refuſing to drink all the toaſts, propoſed by theſe rakes, and their vindicating our refuſal, had kept them in a conſtant ſquabble, whilſt Mellifont was ſure to regulate himſelf according to their motions. Theſe gentlemen, intimidated, affronted, or, ſtruck with ſome ſenſe of ſhame, continued pretty ſilent for ſome time; and then, reſuming their favourite ſubject of race-horſes, to our no ſmall ſatisfaction, drank to each other, and let us alone.

AT laſt this hateful meal was over; and, I proteſt, I would not go thro' the ſame mortifications, for any conſiderations. My mind was then in a very tender ſituation, eaſily ſhock'd, and extremely ſuſceptible of pain. How barbarous, how cruel, how inhuman, then, was it, thus to blaſt the joy of innocence! rudely to tear the veil, that hides thoſe rites, that modeſt decency would conceal; but which neither God, nor reaſon, condemn! with brutal inſolence to trample on the ſnowy robes of baſhful chaſtity! How impudent to ſtare us

into confuſion, and to add a triumph to the affront, by a ridiculous laugh! I am ſhock'd at the recollection of this ſcene; and, therefore muſt conclude, with aſſuring you, that I am

YOUR LADYSHIP'S moſt ſincere,
and affectionate friend,
FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXVIII.

AFTER ſo long a ſilence, Madam, you may juſtly wonder, that I have the aſſurance to confeſs that I am ſtill alive: but however aſhamed I am of my negligence, I have neither the complaiſance, nor the reſolution, to leave the world out of a punctilio of good-breeding, eſpecially as I am in perfect health, and ſo happy in my preſent ſituation, that I can, without the leaſt pain, think of deferring, for many years, a viſit to the heavenly regions. You tell me I have loſt, in the wife, the affection I owe to the friend, and I will not deny your having, in appearance, ſome reaſon for this heavy charge; but as I hate apologies, I will not take the trouble to juſtify myſelf, tho' I would have you think my negligence owing to the different turn of my affairs,

fairs, to my indolence, ſtupidity, or whatever elſe you pleaſe, rather than to a want of that affection, which I ſhall ever feel for you.

THREE months ago, I gave you an account of our marriage; and I have now to add, that, in order to put an end to thoſe ceremonious viſits, which at laſt began to grow extremely fatiguing, we found ourſelves under a neceſſity of leaving myaunt's, ſooner than we had intended: Mr Manly, therefore, bought an eſtate at ſome miles diſtance, with a manſion houſe, which, by his direction, was repaired and furniſhed with all poſſible diligence. We removed hither, about two months after I ſent you my laſt, and, at the ſame time, Mellifont carried his bride to his own eſtate. We frequently ſee each other, and enjoy all that ſatisfaction from theſe viſits, which the moſt intimate friendſhip can afford us. Not the leaſt reſerve ſubſiſts between us: a perfect ſympathy, in each others happineſs, makes us ſuch ſtrangers to ceremony, that we have nothing to do, but to conſult our own inclinations, to render us agreeable to each other. Our houſe is a very neat building, yet ſo plain a one, that it would be trifling too much with your patience, to give a deſcription of it. The ſituation is indeed charming, being ſurrounded with woods

and

and groves, which on the one ſide muſt, in the ſummer ſeaſon, appear extremely delightful, as the other does ſo now, tho' in the midſt of froſt and ſnow. *There* will be the triumph of nature; *here* is the boaſt of art. *There* that uncultivated wildneſs, which pleaſes without method, and without deſign, charming moſt where the eaſy confuſion, and agreeable diſorder, render art ſuperfluous, and labour vain: *here* all the ornaments that art, in deſpight of nature, can beſtow.

IN the front is a tall and ſtately wood, compoſed of oaks, venerable with age, with no other opening, but a large area, and a viſto, which carries the eye from the centre of the building to a conſiderable diſtance. Here the intermingled branches muſt, I fancy, in the ſummer ſeaſon, caſt a ſhade, varied with all the degrees of light, from the bright ſunbeam, glittering through the boughs, to the duſky gloom of ſober twilight.

BEHIND the main building is a garden, of a conſiderable extent; which, even in this ſeaſon of the year, has its beauties. To take no notice of the parterre, which lies next the houſe; the hedges, which are on each ſide the principal walks, are formed of ever-greens, reſembling walls, adorned, at proper diſtances, with

with pilaſters, which, with eternal verdure, branch into all the decorations of architecture. In the midſt of each walk, along an opening, on either hand, the eye is carried through a number of triumphal arches, compoſed of the ſame leafy materials, and which, leading to the extremity of the garden, are bounded by ſeveral fine alcoves, the paintings of which, tho' injured by time, have a very agreable effect. In ſome of the ſquares, compoſed by theſe walks, are fiſh-ponds, in others, groves of fruit trees, and in others, knots of flowers of various forms, which, in the ſeaſon for theſe fragrant ornaments, muſt, I fancy, be vaſtly delightful. In the middle of the garden, where all the principal avenues meet, upon a pretty high aſcent, is a ſummer houſe, the windows of which, as well as the walls, are ſo covered with ever-greens, that the faint obſtructed light ſpreads a gloom perfectly ſoothing; while the cluſters of ſhining berries half covered with ſnow, hanging againſt the glaſs, with froſted leaves of intermingled ſilver and green, ſeem to give the lye to the ſeaſon, and to join in one view Chriſtmas and Autumn. At the entrance is a guard of giants, with their maſſy clubs reſting on the ground; harmleſs monſters! that I can view

with

without the leaſt trembling.' Tis true, they themſelves appear in ſome diſorder, for want of pruning: their heads and bodies are covered with a number of luxuriant branches, and, even their fingers are grown, near half a yard, beyond the juſt proportion, that ought to be allowed them.

AUTUMN was far ſpent, before Lucius and I, attended by my father, went to take a view of our new habitation. I fancied myſelf in fairy land, and could not help expreſſing my ſurprize, that while the winds, on one ſide the houſe, ſcattered in wavy curls the ruſſet leaves, which, with every blaſt, fell from the half naked groves; on the other, they were cloathed with lively verdure, and ſtill appeared ſmiling in their gayeſt liveries.

'TIS true, there is ſomething diſagreably formal, in the ſtudied regularity that reigns here: ſtatues, obeliſks, and triumphal arches, are but awkwardly mimicked in box and yeugh: but ſtill they find work for ſome labouring hands, who might otherwiſe want the means of ſubſiſtance; and, for this reaſon, Lucius may poſſibly continue them in their preſent ſituation, with only a few alterations, in order to render the whole more eaſy, free, and natural. Beſides as the houſe and gardens are in the midſt of a

wood,

wood, this ſpot, even in the ſummer ſeaſon, will agreeably ſet off the wildneſs of the proſpect, and, by a pleaſing contraſt, heighten the variegated ſcene.

IN this peaceful retirement, Madam, we enjoy a tranquillity unknown to courts. Our paſſions, which, before this union, were high-raiſed, and too tenderly ardent to be unmixed with pain, now gently ſoothed, ſink into a delightful repoſe. The diffidence, the flutter of heart is gone, and exchanged for the calmer ſweets of an endearing friendſhip. We have now the ſatisfaction of paſſing our time in the proper employment of reaſonable and immortal beings. No wayward humours interrupt our peace; no little jars fret the tender cord of ſweet content and mutual complacency, which, when once broken, is ſo difficult to join again.

RELIGION, which, to others, is a ſource of the moſt gloomy reflections, is to us an inexhauſtible ſpring of rational and ſublime delight. We daily addreſs the ſupreme and ſovereign good, as our father, our friend, and benefactor; we admire the wiſdom, the wonderous ſkill that ſhines in all his works: we adore his goodneſs, and pour forth our gratitude in humble praiſe; what tranſport can

equal

equal that of gratitude! what delight be comparable, to that of a thankful heart! If you call this enthuſiaſm, it is, at leaſt, an enthuſiaſm, the moſt noble and refined, juſtified by the cooleſt dictates of reaſon, and neceſſary to render human happineſs complete.

OUR minds have hitherto been calm and unruffled. My ſiſter Marilla is my conſtant companion; I have prevailed with her to ſtay with us a fortnight, and we ſpend a part of the day together, either in reading in the ſummer houſe, which Lucius has furniſhed with the moſt valuable ornament, a fine collection of books; or in paying or receiving viſits, among a few ſelect friends. Hither we ſometimes all three repair; and with intermingled chat and reading, find ſubjects ever new and entertaining. Great part of my time is taken up with the management of my family, or in working at my needle. Your ladyſhip ſees what a domeſtic animal I am grown; but while theſe amuſements give an alacrity to my ſpirits, by diverſifying my ſatisfactions, I ſhall have the greateſt reaſon to be pleaſed with them; for though you ſmile at the meanneſs of my taſte, I find a real happineſs ariſing, even from theſe low employments, ſince they not only preſerve peace and order in the fami-

family, but give a greater reliſh to the ſuperior pleaſures of which I am ſenſible, when, unbending my mind, I enjoy the converſation of my friends. As to the vapours, Madam, it is ſo long ſince I have felt thoſe modiſh diſorders, that I ſcarcely know what they mean; ſo that not the roſy milkmaid, happy in her humble obſcurity, that ſings, or laughs, from morn till evening, can be leſs troubled with the ſpleen than I.

I HAVE nothing more to add, but that I am, Yours, &c.

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXIX.

DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH it is impoſſible I ſhould receive an anſwer to my laſt, you having yet ſcarcely read it, I write now to let you ſee that I can commit, upon occaſion, an act of ſupererogation. Add this to my former neglect, and try if it wont, in ſome meaſure, make the balance even.

Two or three days after our arrival here my father returned to London. We were now pretty well ſetled; for thoſe workmen, who

who had been employed in making the neceſſary repairs, being diſcharged, every thing was ſoon reduced into proper order. Mellifont, Amelia, and my ſiſter Marilla, were preſent, when my father, in the moſt tender manner, took his leave. We had all reſolved to accompany him ſome miles on the road; but he poſitively refuſed to ſuffer it, alledging that this would only prolong the uneaſineſs of parting: we were, therefore, obliged to ſubmit, and he being mounted on horſeback, (for he had before made us a preſent of his coach) attended by a ſervant, was ſoon out of ſight. We returned into the hall, and ſtood for ſome time, in a thoughtful poſture, without ſpeaking a word; when at laſt Mellifont, aſſuming an air of chearfulneſs, cry'd out, Come, come, what do we ſtand here for? We muſt divert this penſive humour; ſuppoſe we take a turn in the garden. This motion was immediately comply'd with, and the uneaſy gloom inſenſibly diſperſed; but the weather being pretty ſharp, I ordered a fire to be made in the ſummer houſe, to which we retired. Having taken our places, Marilla ſaid with a ſmile, I was one day laſt week to viſit Miſs Powers, an elderly maiden lady of great prudence, and the daughter of a deceaſed clergyman; who, tho'

cry

ſhe has but a ſmall fortune, finds the means, by help of the greateſt oeconomy, to make a pretty genteel appearance. When I knocked at the door, I was told ſhe was not at home; but as ſhe was expected every moment, I was deſired to walk in, and, indeed, I had hardly ſat down when ſhe entered the room, with her hands covered with dirt, and one of them ſtained with blood. I aroſe, and, with a good dear of concern, enquired what was the matter. O nothing, cry'd ſhe. I have fallen down; but I have only hurt my hand, it was a mercy I did not daub my new gown. It was impoſſible for me, to forbear ſmiling at this anſwer; I deſired ſhe would explain herſelf, and aſked her, if ſhe thought the Almighty could be ſuppoſed to concern himſelf in an affair of ſuch a trifling moment, as a few yards of ſilk, which, though it had been ſoiled, would ſtill anſwer all the ends of dreſs, though not of vanity. She was very much diſpleaſed at this anſwer, and, therefore, all the while ſhe was cleaning herſelf, and preparing a plaiſter for her hand, warmly juſtified the propriety of the expreſſion; alledging, that nothing was too mean to fall under the inſpection of the ſupreme governor of the world.

THIS ſhort ſtory gave riſe to a very long con-

converſation. Lucius began with obſerving, that particular circumſtances will make ſome perſons look upon an inconſiderable pain as a trifle, when compared to the loſs of what can only ſerve to flatter the imagination, and the more ſo, in proportion to the difficulty of procuring theſe gratifications. This, ſaid he, is a common caſe; but if it be proper to call the preſerving a gown unſullied, a mercy, or a favour from heaven, it muſt be equally ſo to make this a petition in prayer: yet, if a lady was to be over heard at her devotions, crying, Lord preſerve my beſt gown and petticoat from ſtains and dirt, the abſurdity would be ſo glaring, that nobody could avoid taking notice of it. One who has a competency, prays for wealth, another, that he may obtain the honour for which he is ſoliciting: but what is this, abſtracted from the moral uſe of wealth and honour, which few ſeem to regard, more than praying for a new head-dreſs or a new gown? Or what are the petitions for the continuance of theſe, when none but themſelves receive the leaſt benefit from them, but praying that the gown, or petticoat may remain unſullied? A gentleman, who has a coach and pair, is ambitious of being drawn by ſix horſes, and, only with this view, ſolli-

ſollicits for a place, to enable him to accomplish it: now, where is the difference between praying, that he may obtain this place, and praying, that, inſtead of a coach and two, he may ride in a coach and ſix? If a pretty milkmaid ſhould pray for money to buy a new top-knot, would her petition be more ridiculous?

MEN are carried away by falſe appearances, and enamoured with the dazling ſhew of ſome glittering trifle. Providence, they flatter themſelves, is employed on their behalf, and the God of nature engaged in procuring the empty, the pernicious bauble. The miſer unjuſtly ſeizes the laſt remains of an unfortunate helpleſs family, expoſes them to want and beggary, and adds the fruits of extortion to his uſeleſs ſtore, and cries, with his hollow eyes lifted up to heaven, It is a mercy that he was not too late to ſave his money! Might not the leſs guilty debauchee go to the ſtews, and, with equal propriety, ſay, It is a mercy that he found his favourite girl at home! Yet what horrid profanation! Can any thing be more ſuperſtitions, more ſhocking and abſurd? Unconſcious of the final reſult of things, while heaven is affronted, they are delighted with the gratification of their favourite vices:

but

but how vain, how deluſive the joy! They miſtook, for happineſs, what was really the cauſe of the ſharpeſt anguiſh. The miſer, as he carries home his gold, is robbed of all his dear recovered treaſure; while the debauchee is expiring with a loathſome diſeaſe.

BUT do you infer from this, brother, ſaid Marilla, that the Deity is entirely unconcerned about the temporal happineſs or miſery of individuals? For my part, I think this would be going a little too far.

LUCIUS pauſed a moment, and then ſaid, he had hitherto only endeavoured to expoſe a falſe notion of providence, and that kind of ſuperſtition, which makes ſome men, who deem themſelves the peculiar favourites of heaven, reſolve events the moſt trivial, in compariſon with the important concerns of human life, into ſignal bleſſings and deliverances. A man, of this turn, knows that gratitude is a duty, and affects to diſcharge it very minutely: but, never reflecting, that the ſuperintending care of providence is exerciſed over a whole univerſe, and with regard to him, only as a part of that whole; his gratitude, which ſhould be always warm and lively, lies dormant, till ſome circumſtance of his own life, no matter how trifling in itſelf, provided it pow-

powerfully ſtrikes his paſſions, calls it forth to exerciſe. He can then prove to you, how much above his neighbours he is the object of the divine favour, and how juſtly his pious acknowledgments render him ſo.

THEY then entered, more largely, into the conſideration of a particular providence; and, as I have recited their obſervations hitherto, I think, I may as well endeavour to give you the ſubſtance of the reſt. But, dear Madam, you muſt excuſe me, if I fail in the performance. It is a taſk ſomewhat above my abilities, and, as I ſhall be forced to abridge a very long diſpute, which met with various interruptions; I am ſenſible, it will want all thoſe natural graces in the repetition which gave life and ſpirit to the converſation.

MELLIFONT obſerved: As the world is a great machine, governed by fixed mechanical laws, it is moſt reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that man, as a free agent, is entirely left to the free exerciſe of his natural abilities, and to all the conſequences reſulting from it: for it is abſurd to imagine, that a being of infinite ſagacity ſhould form a world in ſo bungling a manner, as to make any interpoſition at all neceſſary afterwards; much more to ſuppoſe it ſo imper-

fect, as to ſtand in need of continual botching and mending. A man makes a watch, by which I would illuſtrate my idea of this grand piece of mechaniſm; but this watch, though it may be perfect in its kind, yet, as it wants frequent winding up, and, eſpecially, as it calls for repeated repairs, is a piece of workmanſhip unworthy the ſkill of an almighty artificer.

EXCUSE me, Mellifont, reply'd Lucius, you are going on with a ſuppoſition that will never be granted. I readily allow, that the ſtupendous fabrick of this earth, and all the unnumbered worlds that fill the vaſt immenſity of ſpace, move, in their ſeveral orbits, by the moſt perfect laws: but, does it follow from hence, that the whole is only a grand piece of clockwork, which, being ſet a going, will move ſeveral thouſand years, before it be run down? Gravitation, by which all bodies have a tendency to each other, according to the ſtricteſt enquiry, is one of thoſe qualities, which do not eſſentially reſide in matter, conſequently it can be no part of the machine. Your watch then has not only loſt its ſpring, but the pivots are dropp'd from every wheel, and the whole become a heap of confuſion; nay the very wheels themſelves

have

have loſt their form; and the metal, of which they are compoſed, is crumbled into infinitely minute particles.

THIS gravitation, which evades the ſearch of the moſt curious enquiries, can be reſolved into nothing, but the immediate hand of omnipotence, which locks together the infinitely ſmall particles of ſolids, impels and gives motion to the heavenly bodies, adds freſh fuel to the ſun, and whirls round it this ponderous maſs of earth and ſea, in a conſtant rotation of days and ſeaſons. Hence ariſes a general providence, which, preſiding over all nature, gives fertility to the ſoil, raiſes the ſap in vegetables, bloſſoms in the trees, and glows in every flower.

IT is very apparent, that thunder and lightning, ſunſhine and rain, and, in ſome meaſure, the various degrees of heat and cold, are not under the ſame regulations, as the diurnal and annual changes; ſince ſome of them are ſo far from being periodical, that they have no relation to time and place; but are, with reſpect to us, abſolutely uncertain and precarious. Yet, on ſome of theſe depend the ſubſiſtence, the ſupport, and very being, of the whole animal and vegetable world.

HERE is another inſtance, and in this there

is room for the exertion, both of a general and particular providence: an inſtance, which you, Sir, would have found ſome difficulty in reducing to a ſcheme, wholly mechanical. The earth is parched up with drought, the air is more and more rarified, and, conſequently, by its tenuity, more unfit to raiſe to a due height, and ſupport thoſe miſts from the ſea and rivers, which are neceſſary to form the refreſhing rain. Who is it that directs the clouds to thicken in the heavens, to fall in cool refreſhing ſhowers, and before it be too late, at once to rejoice the earth, and bleſs mankind? If this dry ſeaſon laſted one month, why might it not have laſted two, ſix, or twelve, till man and beaſt had been quite deſtroy'd, and whole regions laid in ruins? Again, the rain falls, the moiſt and ſpungy air ſtill collects, and ſtill pours in a ſettled ſtream, and there is greater reaſon to believe, that it will rain to-morrow, than there was yeſterday that it will rain to day; and while it continues, the probability is ſtill on the ſide of its longer continuance. Did not the parent of mankind interpoſe, the all-enlivening ſun might for ever hide his chearing beams. and we might be curſt with a cloudy ſky, while joy would be for ever baniſhed,

niſhed, and ſeed time and harveſt be no more.

IN theſe inſtances, we daily ſee the moſt convincing proofs of the friendly care of the univerſal parent. Hence, he bleſſes one nation, and depreſſes another; and, even in the ſame country, humbles and exalts whomſoever he pleaſes.

BUT to be more particular, is there the leaſt ſhadow of a probability, if we may judge from analogy, that is the ſtupendous being, who with ſuch infinite care and ſkill, preſerves the material, the vegetable, the animal world. ſhould be entirely regardleſs of the intellectual and moral? That the being, who knows the moſt ſecret ſprings that move the human heart, ſhould not, upon occaſion, influence theſe, and, by affecting an individual, give happineſs to millions? That he ſhould inſpire with wiſdom, or perplex and confound, ſo as beſt to anſwer the wiſe deſigns of his government? That the God of truth ſhould, by diffuſing a little light over a dark benighted mind, promote the cauſe of truth and ſpread the influence of pure religion, a free enquiry, and liberty of conſcience, thro' a whole nation? That the moſt benevolent being in the univerſe ſhould grant the petiti-

ons of the man, whoſe heart is prepared, by humble prayer, to receive the bleſſings he aſks? That the friend of mankind, the moſt virtuous, the moſt amiable being, ſhould look, with complacency, on virtue in diſtreſs, and relieve the pious ſupplicant, who confides in his goodneſs? That he ſhould curb the pride of the ſucceſsful villain, and ſhield the honeſt heart, from the ſly attacks of the fraudulent knave? Is there any thing irrational in this? any thing beneath a God? If it be more noble to change the ſwelling anguiſh of diſtreſs, into the gladſome raptures of gratitude and joy, than to form the moſt curious machine; this muſt be an employment more worthy of a God, than to create a world of lifeleſs matter, or all the glories of what Milton calls the "golden pavement of heaven, or "the bright ſea of jaſper, or of liquid "pearl."

MELLIFONT looked very grave, and, for ſome time, continued ſilent, as if loſt in thought, when ſeeming to recollect himſelf, Well, well, reply'd he, you may, for ought I know, be in the right. We giddy-headed fellows don't think ſo deeply. But, after all, yours is an opinion that, now I think of it, we may reaſonably wiſh to be true. Howe-

ver

ver let us change the ſubject.——Thus, Madam, with indefatigable labour, have I blundered through this long converſation, and am now ſo heartily tired, that I am abſolutely unable to add any thing more, than that I am,

moſt affectionately, yours,

FELICIA MANLY.

P. S. When I had finiſhed the above letter, inſtead of ſending it away immediately, as I at firſt intended, I reſolved to ſhew it Lucius, and this delay retarded my ſending it, till the end of the week. I have juſt now received an anſwer to my laſt; but with what ſurpriſe do I find myſelf ſo unmercifully treated, about one poor paragraph *, which, though you had diſliked, your good-nature might have made you overtook! I am really half angry; but you throw away ſo much wit and humour on my pious rant, as you are pleaſed to call it, that I am almoſt afraid and aſhamed to confeſs it. However, I can't help being perſuaded, that all this mirth is at the expence of your more ſober judgment. But the bottom of my paper puts me in mind, that it is time to conclude this long poſtſcript; I, therefore,

* Letter XXVIII, Page 41. We daily addreſs the ſupreme, &c. from which paſſage Charlotte takes occaſion to ridicule prayer.

refer you to my next for an anſwer, and, for the preſent, throw down my pen.

PAGE 45, *the laſt line but one, after* would, *the reader is deſired to add*, I thought this argument ſo concluſive, that I was quite at a loſs for a reply, and, therefore, introduced a different ſubject. But I have ſince recollected an obſervation of yours, brother, that among ſuperficial thinkers it is no uncommon thing to find an injudicious application of the moſt important truths, when it is made to ſupport their own weak prejudices, to caſes in themſelves of no importance.

LETTER XXX.

DEAR MADAM,

I SHALL take no notice of the ridiculous light, in which you place my manner of life. Your repreſenting me as a recluſe, and the companion of the young Druid Lucius, and your invocation to the rural gods and goddeſſes, on their receiving me to theſe ſequeſter'd ever verdant ſhades, have ſuch a mixture of pleaſantry and humour, that with all that ſolemn ſanctity, which you lay to my charge, I could not help laughing very heartily: but the caſe is a little different, with regard to what you call the puritanical ſcheme, and the pious whim; for your ridicule here has a levity, in my opinion, bordering a little upon the prophane. Yet, for all this, it ſeems you muſt know what method Lucius took

took to make me comply with it, and inſiſt upon my ſending you the particulars. Can any thing be more extraordinary? However, to let you ſee how much I am yours, I obey and proceed.

A FEW days after our marriage, Lucius deſired me to take a turn with him in the garden. I readily complied, and as I peceived an unuſual thoughtfulneſs in his look, I endeavoured to divert him; when, taking hold of my hand, My dear Felicia, ſaid he, I am going to make myſelf appear to you in a very ridiculous light; and to make a propoſal, that I fear will expoſe me to be laughed at: but, perhaps, I injure you——I am perſuaded I do——Cuſtom makes us aſhamed of our duty; we are aſhamed of uttering ſolemn important truths, tho' of the greateſt moment: for however freely we talk of the ſocial duties, it is with reluctance we mention thoſe to our maker.

How you raiſe my curioſity! cry'd I; out with it, dear Sir, I beſeech you, and don't keep me any longer in ſuſpenſe.

You know, my dear, continued he, with a tender warmth, the bleſſings I am loaded with. I imagine myſelf raiſed from almoſt nothing; I ſee my father relieved from thoſe diſtreſſes, which weighed me down; and, while

ſurrounded with plenty, I enjoy one bleſſing more, dearer than all the affluence of life—Ah! what is life compared to this! Can I, O can I, ſmother the gratitude of my heart? Can I confine it within the narrow limits of my own breaſt? Will not you join with me, in adoring the kind ſovereign of the world? Shall we not, with united hearts, at once expreſs the full ſentiments of our ſouls, and keep alive the pious ardor, that longs for utterance? Shall we not, by petitioning the continuance of his mercy, implant and cheriſh thoſe diſpoſitions, that will make us more worthy of that mercy?

As I am equally intereſted in the bleſſings you mention, ſaid I, I ought, perhaps, to reproach myſelf with a want of that ſenſibility, which you expreſs with a warmth that, I muſt own, is very affecting. I have heard prayer ridiculed, and you muſt excuſe me if I ſay, I am afraid I ſhould look upon it, as a few minutes paſſed in a very irkſome manner. There is ſomething ſo ſolemn and gloomy, in the very idea of theſe ſet devotions, that they almoſt fright me.

LET us baniſh, ſaid he, with a ſmile, the gloom of ſuperſtition, and religion will then appear all over amiable; her beauties will bright-

brighten upon the review, and the more we are acquainted with her, the more we ſhall be charmed with her graces. Prayer is one of the firſt duties, dictated by natural religion, the elder ſiſter of Chriſtianity: a duty, naturally ariſing from our obligations to, and dependance on, the univerſal parent, the friend of mankind, the patron of virtue, the moſt amiable, the moſt kind, and benevolent being in the univerſe: a duty, enjoined by Chriſtianity, and enforced by the example of our great law-giver himſelf. Did we, my dear, addreſs a ſtern and rigorous tyrant, a gloomy terror and awful dread might juſtly hang upon our ſpirits: but how great is the difference, when inſpired by gratitude, and prompted by the glow of filial love, we addreſs a being, whoſe all-commanding goodneſs demands our utmoſt eſteem, our higheſt complacency! Surely, it muſt then be accompanied with a moſt ſublime and rational delight!

I KNOW it is objected, that, as we can inform the deity of nothing, but what he knew before, and can aſk him for nothing, but what his original goodneſs will prompt him to grant, without our petitioning for it; prayer muſt be, in its own nature, abſurd and impertinent.

IT is true, that this duty makes no change in God; it is true, he will grant, without our petitions, what it is fit for infinite benificence to give, and us to receive: but, it is as true, that the exerciſe of this duty, by changing the diſpoſitions of the mind, changes that fitneſs; as the humble ſupplicant is an object, more worthy of the divine bleſſing and protection, than the man, whom no ſenſe of duty can fix, and no obligations bind. Does it not exalt, refine, and elevate the mind, by leading it to the contemplation of the moſt ſublime and important truths? Does it not call away the heart, from the purſuit of folly and madneſs? Does it not raiſe the ſoul to the god of virtue, and, conſequently, to virtue itſelf? Does it not check the growth of pride, ſelf-ſufficiency, and malice? Does it not keep awake the tender ſentiments of humanity, our gratitude to our maker, our affection to our friends?

ENOUGH, my dear Lucius, here I cry'd, enough. I own myſelf conquered. My reluctance is vaniſhed.

YOU muſt know, Madam, it was at the cloſe of the day, when Lucius deſired me to walk out, and, as the ſun was then ſetting, it began to grow dark; we, therefore, went into

into the thickeſt part of a tuft of trees, where we might ſafely remain unobſerved, when like the firſt happy pair, we preſented our evening oriſons, which, for the future, were commonly performed in my chamber. When we came to remove, it was reſolved, that this duty ſhould be performed, twice a day, in the family; and, on this account, we choſe the moſt ſober young people we could find for our ſervants. I dare ſay, we have more order and decency obſerved in our family, than in any other within ten miles round us. We ſeldom omit going to church twice every ſunday; not ſo much to gain any new acquiſition of knowledge, as to keep alive a ſenſe of our duty, and, at the ſame time, to ſet an example to the reſt of the pariſh; the lower ſort of which are greatly influenced by what they ſee us great folks, as they call us, do: for here, with reſpect to example, one or two thouſand pounds a year has a thouſand times more efficacy, than all the advantages of ſuperior ſenſe and reaſon.

You have now two letters, ſince I received your laſt, and, if they don't give your ladyſhip the vapours, I may be in hopes, that you will, in time, be good for ſomething elſe, beſides giving felicity to one man, plea-

ſure

ſure to a few friends, and happineſs to a number of dependants: you may in that caſe, I ſay, become ridiculous enough to exerciſe the wit, and exhauſt the ſpirits of your gay companions; but you will never have the honour, like me, to find a friend, who will, with ſuch ſparkling wit, and fine addreſs, endeavour to laugh you out of your religion.

I HAVE the honour to be

YOUR LADYSHIP'S

very humble ſervant,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXI.

IN order to introduce this Letter, Madam, it is neceſſary for me to inform you, that my father, before he took his leave of us, had ſeveral times hinted to Lucius, that it would be no diſadvantageous employment for him, to learn the characters, and manners, of his tenants, and even of the poor reſiding on his eſtate: that he ought, particularly, to enquire into their circumſtances, and that, as his intereſt was cloſely connected with theirs, to endeavour to ſerve them to the utmoſt of his power. As ſoon as my father was gone,

Lucius

Lucius reſolved to pay them a viſit, and yeſterday begun to put his deſign in execution, imagining that, as he was yet quite unknown, he might be the better able to inform himſelf to his ſatisfaction. Laſt night, after his return, I learnt his ſucceſs, and as he happened upon ſome adventures, in this expedition, worth relating, I ſhall give them to you, while they are yet freſh in my memory.

HE ſet out ſoon after it was light, dreſſed but meanly, and with only one ſervant out of livery, and rode to a farm houſe, at about two miles diſtance; where entering the yard, he diſmounted, knocked at the door, and aſked for the maſter, who came running from the ſtable, and, in a ſurly manner, demanded what he wanted. Lucius deſired to be informed, if he knew any body that could ſupply him with a load of hay. This queſtion at once civilized the farmer, who before ſeemed reſolved to behave in a very brutal manner; but the bargain being ſoon made, Lucius went in to pay, and the farmer to receive his money, when a mug of ale being brought, the latter, after a good hearty draught, became, in an inſtant, one of the moſt ſociable fellows in the univerſe: he ſhook Lucius twenty times by the hand, with a freedom, as great as

if

if it had been authorized by a long acquaintance. Having entertained him, for half an hour together, with the price of corn and cattle at the market, Lucius, with the air of a ſtranger, enquired about his farm, and aſk'd him, who was his landlord; when he began in the following manner.

Yo mun know, meſter, that I ha' got a new lonlord; I doant know who he is, but they ſay he has married one of your Lonon laidies, who, they ſay, has a mort o'money; beſides, they ſay, he is one o'thoſe good natured foo's look'e, that wull do ony mon a ſervice that axes him, thof he never ſead him aw his born days; and beſides, I believe the grey mare is the better horſe, far he is meety fond of his lady, never ſtirs from whome, and never gets drunk. Now my dame ſays, that ſuch a lonlord as this'n is fit to be impoſed upon; but I doant mind what ſha ſays, for I am meſter in my own houſe, and weant be contradicted by the beſt woman that wears a heead. No, no, let Tummus Clod aloan for that, before I'd be like my lonlord, I'd hong myſelf.

You are in the right, my friend, replied Lucius laughing, always take care to be maſter in your own houſe. Ey, Ey, rejoined the courageous farmer, I am a wiſe mon, I can tell ye that,

that, and a ſcollard too, for I can reead and write, and I was one whoale month in my accidancy, and larn'd ſomething about parts of ſpeeach, and neauns and prunams, and I hardly know what my ſelf. I believe it, cry'd Lucius, you are a great man, and may be as great a man as your landlord yet, for ought I know.

Odzookers, gi'me yo'r hond again, cried the farmer, delighted with the compliment; yo'r an honeſt felley, I'll be ſworn; but here's to ye heartily: but as I was a ſaying, my lonlord is a ſoft ſort of a mon, and ſo, as I owe hauf a year's rent to my old lonlord, I have a mind my new lonlord ſhould pey it, but yo' munno ſay one thing of it. O no, replied Lucius, I won't ſay any thing of it, without you tell your new landlord of it yourſelf. No, no, who would be foo' then? rejoined the farmer; I only fell a few trees that were ſtonding on the lond, time out o'mind, and which I ſhould no' do by reet, a cauſe they were mentioned in my leaſe. Well, but as to the honeſty of the thing, friend Thomas, cried Lucius, how do you reconcile that? Honeſty! reply'd Clod, why as to that, meſter, you know we mun live. It is true I am pretty well to paſs; but a mon ſhould take care o' his family, and ye know what the eye does no' ſee, the heart does no' rue, as the

proverb

proverb goes; and a little out of a mickle is no' miſs'd. But pray, ſaid Lucius, how much may the trees you have cut down be worth? Why look'e, my lad, reply'd the farmer, a hundred pound; and ſo I ſhall ha' ten paund in my pocket, for my trouble; that yo know is but fair. For your trouble! cried Lucius, that is very extraordinary. Why yo know, rejoined the booby, a mon ſhould be paid for his labour, and beſides ſuch a hen-peck'd—

HERE his wife entered, who it ſeems had overheard ſome part of this fine diſcourſe; and giving him a look of contempt, You are a wiſe felley, cried ſhe, to tell aw ye'r affairs to a ſtreanger! Ah! ye oud foo', if I had no more wit than yo, ye might have been hang'd before now. Nay daam, cried he, doent ſcold, ye know that you adviſed me to it. I had no' fell'd the trees, if ye had no' made me. I made ye, cried ſhe, colouring, and coming a ſtep or two nearer; I made ye! I made ye tell of it too, did I? Anſwer me that, do dunce, do; this mon, for ouwt yo know, may tell ſquire Monly. No, no, cried he trembling, he looks like an honeſt felley. An honeſt felley! ye raſcal; an honeſt felley is a very proper perſon to tell that yo are a rogue. O that ever I ſhould be yoaked to a foo'! I am no more a foo' than other folks, cried

cried he, juſt loud enough to be heard. Than other folks, ye blockhead! ſhe rejoined, as loud as ſhe could baul, I ſuppoſe yo mean me.—I a fool, ye dog! There take that; and here ſhe ſeized the mug, and throwing it at her huſband, it flew over his head, whilſt the liquor was pretty equally divided between all the three. She now burſt into tears, ſobbing out, Caw me a foo' ye barbers mon yo; I doant deſerve to be treeated a this'n, I doant, ye wicked munſter yo.

Lucius here ſlipp'd out, and calling his ſervant, the honeſt courageous farmer followed him to the door, ſcratching his head; but looking behind him, and ſeeing his wife ſeated in a chair, at the other end of the room, he whiſpered, It is well you were here, meaſter, or I believe I ſhould ha' murdered her. Lucius made no anſwer; but, mounting and riding off, told him he would ſend a waggon for his hay; and immediatly went to take a view of the devaſtation made among his trees, when he found eighteen or twenty of the largeſt oaks lying ready to be carried away.

AGREABLE as this diſcovery might appear, Lucius was under ſome perplexity, on thinking how he ought to proceed with the farmer. He now viſited ſeveral of his other tenants, from whom he learnt nothing worth mentioning.

They

they were in general honeſt plain men, blunt, and extremely ignorant: and afterwards paid a viſit to the miniſter of the pariſh, with whom he dined. On his return home, he obſerved, at a ſmall diſtance from the road, a farm-houſe belonging to the ſame manor; hither he went, and entering without ceremony, thought he obſerved a wildneſs in the looks of the people, that ſeem'd to expreſs a good deal of fear and apprehenſion. At firſt, he fancied he might be known; but he was ſoon of a different opinion, for the woman riſing from her ſeat, with a trembling voice, aſked what he wanted; and, in the ſame inſtant, the husband ſlipp'd out at the back door. Lucius reply'd, that he was very ſorry, if his being there gave them any uneaſineſs; and ſo far from doing them any hurt, he would ſerve them to the utmoſt of his power. The woman eyed him very attentively, and ſtood, for ſome time, ſilent, which only ſerved to encreaſe his curioſity; at laſt ſhe thanked him, and aſk'd again what he wanted. Want! ſaid he, why you behave ſo odly, that I want to know what is the matter. You look like a good ſort of woman, added he, and I ſhould be glad to drink a diſh of tea with you; which I had rather have here, than at a publick houſe. Lack-a-day ſaid ſhe, we never drink ta; but

yo

yo ſhall be welcome, if yo'll ſend for it, and cook it yo'r ſelf; for I doant well know how to go about it. On this Lucius gave her a guinea; the tea and ſugar were bought, and a teapot, and two earthen cups and ſaucers borrow'd; but when the change was brought to Lucius, he gave it amongſt the children. This entirely won the good woman's heart; ſhe now loſt all her fears, and at his requeſt, readily ran to call her husband; who was no ſooner ſeated, than Lucius informed him that he was a gentleman who had a pretty eſtate in that part of the country; but as he was upon a frolic, he did not chuſe to tell his name. He then urged the farmer, to let him know the cauſe of that diſorder, which, on his entering the houſe, was viſible in all their countenances,

You great folks, cried the honeſt man, have no notion of the misfortunes and cares, that ſometimes fall upon us, who are forced to ſtruggle hard to get an honeſt living. One bad ſeaſon puts us back ſo far, that ſeveral good ones can hardly repair our loſſes. This, meſter, is my caſe. About four year ago I had a rot among my ſheep, which kill'd above hauf, and thoſe the beſt o' my flock; and as my corn proved bad, I could no' pay my rent: this put me behind hond; which my lonlord excuſed,

excuſed, and promiſed not to diſtreſs me: but as he is dead, and the lond ſold to one Squire Monley, his executors, as they conno' ſeize my ſtock, threaten to throw me into jail, for the hauf year that is ſtill due. This makes me o' moſt diſtracted. There is near a quarter due to my new lonlord, and if they ſhould let me alone, I'know no' when I ſhall be able to pey him. But, *werriday, I ha' no hopes that they will forbear any longer. Tho' my fears keep me awake, I every morning dread the leet, and when I riſe, I tremble to think that, perhaps the next neet I may lig in a priſon; and when it grows dark, I am glad that, once more, I ſhall ſleep in mine own bed, and be ſecure till morning. Sunday is, indeed, a happy dey: I then enjoy my ſecurity, but as the neet comes on my fears return.—O meſter, it breaks my heart to think what will become of my poor family, which you ſee is none of the ſmalleſt! I am a feard to go about my work. tremble at the feet of a ſtroanger. I hardly know what to do. In ſhort, I am o' moſt mad.

Lucius was ſo extremely affected at the moving expreſſive tone, and the artleſs ſimplicity, with which the poor man told his diſtreſs, that he

* A word of nearly the ſame meaning as well-a-day.

he could ſcarcely refrain from tears, and it was with much difficulty that he concealed his concern.

WELL but ſuppoſe, you ſhould tell your caſe to your new landlord, ſaid Lucius; if you can give him proof that you are an honeſt man, he may, perhaps, take the debt upon himſelf, and rather than loſe a good tenant give you time for payment. I know him, he is a good-natur'd man, and I dare ſay he will not be hard upon you.

No, no, replied the unhappy man; I cou'd ſooner dee than do it. I cou'd never ſpeeak freely to ſuch a rich mon. I am not uſed to ſuch company. Beſides, it would ſignify nothing. It is a miſerable life to be all'as in fear!

Now I have thought of ſomething, cried Lucius, with a forced ſmile, that I am ſure will do. Have you not ſome timber growing on your land? Yes, returned the farmer; but what then? Why I'll tell you, reply'd Lucius, ſuppoſe you cut it down, and ſell it, and pay your debt with the money; Mr Manly will never miſs it.

THE farmer here held up his hands, and his wife examined him more narrowly, and, if poſſible, with greater terror than before. At laſt, the honeſt man, ſtarting up, as if affronted, ſhock'd,

ſhock'd, and inſulted; cry'd, Get out o' my houſe, ye villain; do ye tak me for a rogue? And, here he ſeiz'd a large oak ſapling, that ſtood in the chimney corner. Lucius got up, and was beginning to ſpeak in his own defence; but he had hardly opened his lips, when he was interrupted. Yo a gentleman! yo the devil! Ay, cry'd the wife, it is the devil, ſure enough, for all he has hid his cloven foot. Here, gi' me the money, cried ſhe to her children; there, tak yo'r curſt money, added ſhe, throwing it at him; every geſture expreſſing the fright and agitation of her mind. Lucius endeavoured, in vain, to ſpeak; Get out, was ſtill repeated, and the huſband, holding up his ſapling, advancing, cry'd, I'll ſee if he be the devil or no. On this poor Lucius, retreating backwards, tumbled over the threſhold into the yard, and the door was immediately clapp'd to, and lock'd. He received, however, not the leaſt damage by the fall, except what his coat and wig ſuſtained; for a heap of friendly dung, that had been kindly raiſed by ſome cows and horſes, received the fallen, tho' formidable Lucius. But, though his bed was ſoft, it was not a fit place to reſt in; he aroſe, therefore, immediately, when he overheard the poor honeſt man cry out to himſelf:

God

God forbid that I ſhould be ſuch a villain, as this felley would ha me be. I'd go to a jail firſt. If I am miſerable, I am honeſt at leaſt, and, after aw, that is ſome comfort. Mean while the ſervant, who was walking in the yard, ſeeing Lucius in this diſorder, ran to his aſſiſtance; but, finding him already upon his legs, without ſpeaking a word, in a moment broke the door, which, it ſeems, was a very ſlight one, to pieces. The woman was, unhappily, fainted away in a chair, and the good man was aſſiſting her: him he ſeized by the collar, and, in an inſtant, threw up his heels, and was preparing to revenge the abuſe done to his maſter, when Lucius put aſide the blow, and, with difficulty, dragged him away, for he quitted his hold with much reluctance. But they had hardly mounted their horſes, when the farmer's ſon, and a ſervant man and maid, who had heard the buſtle, the two firſt from the ſtable, and the laſt from the dairy, came running to the field of battle. A ſpeedy retreat was abſolutely neceſſary, for this was now an improper time to hold a parly; they, therefore, having gained the gate of the yard, ſet ſpurs to their horſes, and were ſoon out of ſight.

THUS, Madam, I have given you the hiſto-

ry of one day's ramble, and, if nothing prevents, I ſhall, very ſpeedily, ſend you the ſequel of the ſtory of theſe two farmers with ſuch oppoſite characters. Mean time I am very much

YOUR LADYSHIP'S, &c.

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXII.

YOU think it ſtrange, Madam, that tho' Lucius ſhould relate the diſcourſe of the farmers, in the dialect of the county, I ſhould have memory ſufficient to retain the pronunciation; and, from this remark, you infer, that I have had more regard to your diverſion, than to the veracity of an hiſtorian. But here you are greatly miſtaken; you ought to conſider the difficulty of living in the country, without catching the peculiarities of the language. This I have ſufficiently obtained. So that I have nothing more to do, than to remember the words: the pronunciation have already. I have a good deal of the country accent, in my ordinary converſation, and, whenever I am diſpoſed to it, can talk in the true dia-

dialect, almoſt, as fluently as the ſprightly milkmaid, ot the wife of the plowman.

THE day after the adventure of the two farmers, I was no ſooner ſtirring, than I heard an unuſual buſtle below ſtairs, and ſeveral perſons talking very loud, with ſome ſounds, which, though I could not perfectly underſtand, ſeemed to expreſs great amazement. My woman could give me no ſatisfaction, I, therefore deſired her to ring the bell; when a ſervant entered the room, with as much terror in her looks, as if ſhe had juſt ſeen a ghoſt. What is the matter, Mary? ſaid I; you look frighted. O law, Madam, cried ſhe, wud* you think it! Did you ever hear the like? The devil has appeared to my†neam and my naunt Saunders, and teld them, that as how—as how—As how what? returned I.

* *You*, in this county, carries, with it, ſome thing of the idea of a compliment, as expreſſing more reſpect than *Yo*; and, for this reaſon, huſbands and wives, in particular, who, on common occaſions, politely, as they think, make uſe of the word *You*, whenever they quarrel conſtantly contract it into *Yo*. This is an obſervation particularly recommended to the conſideration of that ingenious gentleman, the compiler of the Engliſh dictionary, now in the preſs.

† My neam, and my naunt; other counties ſay gaffer and gammer.

Why as how, continued ſhe, he wud ha him cut down aw the 'ſquire's trees, and he wud gi' him a power o' money for them; and he gived them ſome money, which was, I ſuppoſe, for arneſt; but they wud no' tak' it. Indeed, Madam, it is true; for, I verily believe, we ſhall ha' the w'oll ſtory in print. Pho, Pho, is that all? cried I; it is an idle tale, take my word for it. Pray what ſort of a devil was it? O? he was a meety civil devil at firſt, ſaid ſhe, and as like a honſome man as ever you ſeed; but, at laſt, he vaniſhed out o' the door, as one may ſay, in a flaſh o' fire; and then they* made the door after him, when an ugly devil came pop through the key hole, and wud fean ha' murdered the good man; but the hondſome devil poo'd him away, and wud no' let him; but, as they went out, they had like to ha' takken the ſide o' the houſe wi' em; for the doore was broken aw to pieces, and to be ſure there was a great ſmell of brimſtone. I mar'l whether the handſome devil had no' great ſaucer een, when my neam was going to ſtrike him; for goody Simple ſays, ſha thinks ſha heard ſay as much. But the ugly devil had two great platter een, like balls of fire, and turned into the ter-

* Shut the door.

terribleſt creature that ever was ſeen. There is nothing in it, Mary, ſaid I, am ſure of it. Nay, Madam, ſaid ſhe, to be ſure you know beſt, and I am a'moſt o' your mind, for tho' they ſay, old Nick can dizen himſelf like an angel of leet, yet yo know as how he can never go without his cloven foot; and Betty Saunders look'd wi' aw the een in her head, but cou'd na ſee it. But, methinks, it is a pitty ſuch a fine ſtory ſhud no' be true. For, of aw things, I like to hear about ghoſts, and haunted houſin, and ſuch like. Our Robin, Madam, loff'd at goody Simple, and ſaid ſhu was a lying awd witch, and talk'd as thof he would kick her out o' the houſe; but we wud no let him; and then he flew into a paſſion, and ſaid his een were no more like platters, nor balls of fire, than hern, and if ſhu ſaid it again, he wud kick her ar—, breech, I mean, ſaving your preſence. Here ſhe dropped courteſy. But, continued ſhe, we cou'd no tell what to mak o' that, for the ſquire came in, and ſaid, Huſh, not a word, Robin; and then ſtaid to hear the woman himſelf, while ſhe eat the meat I giv'd her quietly, and made me fetch her a mug of ale.

WELL, ſaid I, I have enough of this idle ſtuff; tell John he muſt go and bring Mrs.

Saunders to me. Here Lucius appeared, and added, And her husband too, and bid him be sure to tell him he must not be frighted; for I have some good news for him. And then coming to me, as Mary left the room, Well, my Dear, said he, you find I am mounted on the wings of fame; Mary, I suppose, has given you a full account. O yes, said I, they are resolved to make a devil of you; they have already collected some diabolical circumstances, and I don't doubt but before night they will have dressed up you, and your man with all the terrors that the most wild imagination can invent. No matter, said Lucius though they paint me in the character of a devil, the portrait they give of me is so unlike the original, that I shall never be known by it. If poor Robin is already such a monster, what must he be by to-morrow morning, when the story will be spread thro' the whole county, and every one has added some dreadful circumstance to the fiction? Horns and hoofs will be the least of his deformities. Had the old woman stay'd till then, before she brought us the news, poor Robin would have gaped, and stared, and wondered, with the rest. However, I am glad the honest farmer is sent for. The poor man's distresses have touched

me

me very nearly, and ſomething muſt be done for him. I intended to ſend to him this afternoon, but I am better pleaſed that I ſhall ſee him this morning, ſince he will now have a few hours taken from his anxiety, and added to his happineſs. A valuable conſideration, ſaid I, that ought not to be forgot, whenever we intend to confer an obligation.

IN about two hours time, the honeſt farmer made his appearance on horſeback, with his wife behind him, freſh ſhaved, and both dreſſed out in their Sunday's garb. All the ſervants, in an inſtant, ran out to ſee them; except my woman, and Robin, who was, purpoſely, ſent out of the way, on a meſſage to Nottingham; for they had been informed of their coming, by John, who returned near an hour before. They diſmounted at the door, when a volley of queſtions were, in a moment, diſcharged from every mouth, to which it was impoſſible for either of them to anſwer. This Lucius, and I, obſerved from the dining room window. I immediately went down, and found that the men had now ſurrounded the farmer, and the maids his wife, whom they all viewed with looks of aſtoniſhment, all deſirous of being anſwered firſt, as thinking their own queſ-

tion of the moſt conſequence. I ſtood, in the hall, near a minute, to obſerve this ridiculous ſcene; but, whatever anſwer they had received, I obſerved a general air of diſſatisfaction almoſt as great as that which appeared immediately after; when, in order to draw the good couple from the clamour of this tormenting perſecution, I ordered them to be conducted into a back parlour, facing the garden, and I could hear diſtinctly, as they ſeparated, one cry, No een of fire! another, No cloven foot! and, from different voices, No horns! No tail! No nothing, I think; It's a pity! Ah! what a fine ſtory is here come to nought!

THEY had been in the parlour about two minutes, when I went to them. I found them ſtanding; but taking a chair myſelf, inſiſted upon their being ſeated, which, after ſome clumſey ſcrapes from the one, and as awkward curteſies from the other, they, at laſt, complied with; but ſat together, cloſe up to the wall, in the moſt diſtant corner of the room. As ſoon as this ceremonial was over, which laſted ſome time, for theſe country people certainly think good manners conſiſts in being troubleſome, Mrs. Saunders, ſaid I, they tell very ſtrange things of you. You

have

have been dealing with the devil, it ſeems; at leaſt, he has been paying you a viſit. Who, I deal with the devil? cry'd the good woman, in a fright; Lord help me, I hope I ha' nothing to do wi' him. I hope ſo too, ſaid I; but, pray what foundation is there for this ſtrange ſtory? Here, ſhe related it, in much the ſame manner that Lucius had done, only omitting her huſband's account of his misfortunes, and making uſe of the terms, handſome devil, and ugly devil, to make a diſtinction between them: but ſhe miſtook one circumſtance; which, indeed, had, as ſhe underſtood it, a very diabolical appearance; for ſhe aſſerted, that the laſt time Lucius and Robin entered the houſe, they came in thro' the key-hole, and broke the door to pieces, as they went out; but, here the huſband interpoſed, and ſet her right; when ſhe apologized for her miſtake, by ſaying, that ſhe ſaw the door locked, before ſhe fainted away, and when ſhe came to herſelf, ſhe found it broke to pieces; and as ſhe was before pretty ſure it was the devil, ſhe thought it moſt natural for him to come in at the key-hole, and to take the ſide of the houſe, or the door, at leaſt, away with him, when he went out; for this ſhe remembered to have heard, when

a child, was his common cuſtom. And ſhe concluded, with aſſuring me, that ſhe would not tell a lye about it. I believe ſo, ſaid I, and I am very well pleaſed with your ſincerity; for, as I know the ſtory better than you, you could not have deceived me. That is very ſtrange, cry'd the honeſt man, with a look of amazement; Know it better than we! Why, Madam, you was no' in my houſe too! If it be ſtrange, ſaid I, it is true; but I heard a very different ſtory this morning. Why as to the matter of that, Madam, cry'd the wife, folks tell ſo many lyes about it, that I am aſheamed to hear them: and, wud you think it? they are angry at me, a cauſe I weant ſey as they ſey, and wull ha' it their own wey, whether I wull or no.

WELL, that is not your fault, ſaid I; but you ſhould not have ſo readily imagined it to be an evil ſpirit. Nor ſhould you, Mr. Saunders, have been ſo ready to conclude him a rogue. You ought, at leaſt, to have heard what he had to ſay in his own defence, for it was not without reaſon, that he made the propoſal of your cutting down Mr. Manly's trees. You may take my word for it, that you are both miſtaken. I know every particular of the ſtory. You, Mr. Saunders, gave a very

a very moving account of your misfortunes to a very worthy gentleman, the perſon you call the handſome devil. He heartily pitied you: he reſolved to ſerve you: and, I aſſure you, that you may now ſleep ſecurely, and awake without dread: for he has pleaded your cauſe ſo effectually to Mr. Manly, that he has promiſed to take the debt upon himſelf, and to wait till you can, conveniently, pay him. The farmer lifted up his eyes, and, in an ecſtaſy, cried out, God bleſs 'in! and then ſeemed endeavouring to ſay more, but ſtopped, as if the ſtruggle in his breaſt, between joy and gratitude, choaked up his voice: however, ſome tears, at leaſt, as expreſſive as words, ſtood ready to fall from his eyes, which, with once or twice turning aſide his head, he wip'd away with the back of his hand. Mean while, the good woman cried out, in a ſhrill key: A hondſome devil! A hondſome angel! God reward him, and the ſquire to boot. But what made the elevation of her voice more remarkable, was the low trembling diffidence with which ſhe ſpoke before. There was now a ſilence of, at leaſt, half a minute, which ended in the old woman's burſting out a crying, which ſhe did moſt heartily, repeating ſeveral times, with

her hand on her husband's knee, and her eyes fixed very affectionately on his, Well, I was never so glad in aw my life.—No never in aw my life. At last, the farmer cried, lifting up his eyes, and looking at me, An angel! ay, an angel indeed! or, after aw the usage I ha' gi'n him——Well, God's blessing leet upon you aw! I thank you, Mr. Saunders, said I, if you reckon me among the number. But here comes either your landlord, or your friend.

LUCIUS, who had been walking in the garden, in order to give me time to prepare them to see him, was now coming up an avenue facing the door; but, at the mention of the word landlord, I observed, that the poor man's diffidence and reserve, which began to wear off, immediately returned, and his features, in a moment, became contracted; perhaps his joy was damped by the very idea of a person, whom he had before considered only as an object of fear. Bnt, however this be, not the least alteration appeared in the wife, except a little female ambition, or rather, that regard for decency, and decorum of character, which is as visible in the spruce dairy maid, as in the dutchess. She, therefore, took her eyes from her husband, and her hand from his knee,

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laid ſmooth her clean, though coarſe white apron, pulled down, lower, a pair of old-faſhioned ruffles, and ſtroak'd her hair under her cap: and this was done with that natural motion, and compoſed look, which ſometimes makes all the diſtinction between theſe actions, when performed by a country houſewife, and the more affected airs of ſome lady of diſtinction.

LUCIUS now opened the door, when I cried, O Sir, is it you? I have prepared them to ſee you, and you may ſafely come in, without being taken for a devil. And then addreſſing myſelf to the farmer, Here is your friend, ſaid I, do you know him, now he has changed his dreſs? Lucius returned my compliment; and then running to the farmer, who was ſtanding biting his hat, by the ſide of his wife, My honeſt friend, ſaid he, I am glad to ſee you. Well, are you diſpoſed to knock me down now? The farmer ſcraped, the wife curteſied, and both begged his pardon. Well, replied he, you find I don't reſent your treatment of me. But, Madam, won't you favour me with a glaſs of wine, to drink to my new friends? added he, turning to me. To be ſure, ſaid I, and rung the bell, on which, a ſervant coming, the wine was called for,

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and being brought, the man was ordered to retire. Lucius filled, and taking the farmer by the hand, wiſhed him happier days; and having, each of them, drank their glaſs, he deſired the honeſt man to take a turn or two with him in the garden; and, at the ſame time, begg'd the favour of me to go with them, alledging, that I might leave my woman to keep Mrs. Saunders company.

As this ſtory of the appearance of the devil, had ſpread, with wonderful ſwiftneſs, thro' the country, Lucius was unwilling it ſhould be known, that he had any hand in it. And, indeed, he had not the leaſt ambition of being diſtinguiſhed, among the country gentlemen, by the name of the handſome devil; a title, which would be inevitably given him, was he known to be the principal actor. And, beſides, as he had more tenants to viſit, he would not have it mentioned, that he had ever viſited any of them; ſince the reſt might expect to ſee him, in the ſame manner, and, being put upon their guard, might fruſtrate his deſign, of penetrating into their characters, manners, and circumſtances. Theſe motives were the riſe of this preconcerted plot, of making him appear rather as the friend of Lucius, than as Lucius himſelf, before the farmer's wife;

wife; whom, tho' a very good ſort of a woman, he was unwilling to truſt with a ſecret of ſuch conſequence.

WE were no ſooner in the garden, than the farmer, addreſſing himſelf to Lucius, ſaid, You mun excuſe me,—I conno' thank you as I wud. If you could read my thowts, there wud be no need of words to tell you my joy, my ſurprize, my gratitude. But ye mun forgi' me, if I ſay, I love you, for it is no' my fault, I conno' help it: and this lady mun forgi' me too: our ladies are ſo proud they weant ſpeak to a poor mon; but ſhu is ſo good, ſo free, and the meſſenger of ſuch good news, that I conno' help loving her; and my heart will ſay, in ſpight o' me, God bleſs her, and my kind freend: and e'en let it ſey ſo and it wull: for, if I did no' gi' my heart this vent, I verily believe it wud burſt. I never preyd ſo heartily, in aw my born days, and never ſaid prayers wi' hauf the pleaſure I ſay theſe two or three words. You have made a new moon o' me; I verily believe, I cou'd o'moſt pray for you as well as a parſon; ay, as well as thof I read in a book. Thank you, thank you, God bleſs you too, we both reply'd, at the ſame time, with a ſatisfaction, though leſs tumultous, as delightful, at leaſt,

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as his: and, indeed, the poor man appeared raiſed above himſelf; the tranſports of his joy, by getting a vent in words, ſeemed to become more exquiſite. He talked with a greater volubility of ſpeech, to which a half pint glaſs of wine, which he had lately drank, might, perhaps, contribute. His eyes ſparkled with affectionate gratitude, and a kind of delightful rapture ſeemed hovering over every lineament of his countenance.

THE good man was now ſilent, but, after a ſhort pauſe, reſumed, Is this the mon I turned out o' my houſe? Is this he, that I was yeaſterday going to ſtrike? Well, no matter, had I uſed him kindly, I ſhud no' ha' know'd him ſo weel. I wud ha' done ony honeſt thing for him, for ſaving me from a jeyl, I wud ha' look'd upon him, as my beſt freend. It wud ha' been a kind action, and I ſhud ha' remembered it as long as I lived; but, methinks, I ſhud no' ha' loved him ſo weel as I do now. But, good Sir, are you ſure 'ſquire Monly weant be hard upon me? Never fear it, replied I, I will anſwer for your landlord. He thanked me, and then looking at Lucius, cry'd, My generous friend, mun not I know to whom I am obliged? Mun not I know your neame? O yes, re-

reply'd Lucius, this you ſhall ſoon know; but I muſt deſire you to keep it a ſecret, and not to let, even your wife or ſon, know that my name is Manly. What my lonlord himſelf! cried he, in a rapture: then, indeed, I ha' nothing to fear! My lonlord that I have abuſed! My lonlord that is ſo generous! I can only wonder. What ſhall I do for you? How mun I mak you amends? Leave that to me, Lucius reply'd, here are forty guineas, that I have put in my pocket for you, to pay the executors of your late landlord, which you muſt do this evening, before you go; you may give me a note for the money, and I will contrive a way for you to pay it again. I then took my turn, and telling him, that as he had been ſo diſtreſſed, he, and his family, might want ſome of the common neceſſaries of life, to ſupply which, I deſired his acceptance of five guineas, which he received, bowing low, with a ſubmiſſive kind of joy and rapture. Lucius, now, gave him an account of his going to Thomas Clod's, and of his telling him, that he had cut down his trees; but, as he was yet undetermined how to proceed with him, deſired him to keep a ſtrict watch, that none of them were removed, and no more cut down, without giving him

him immediate notice; adding, that he would pay him handſomely for his trouble: and dinner being now ready, the farmer went in, and rejoined his wife. They both dined at our table, and, after Lucius had again privately enjoined the good man to ſecrecy, they, with, many warm, though homely teſtimonies of gratitude, took their leave.

I am, Madam,

YOUR LADYSHIP'S

moſt affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXIII.

DEAR MADAM,

LUCIUS has been again among his tenants, and has now finiſhed his ramble. The laſt time he was out upon this expedition, he obſerved a man with white locks, and a venerable aſpect; but want and care, rather than extreme old age, ſeemed to have ſilvered his hair; his eyes were hollow, his perſon tall and meagre, and he had a placid ſerenity in his countenance, that beſpoke a kind of joyful compoſure of mind. His coat was of broadcloath, and, though worn threadbare,

and

and well patched, was perfectly clean. He was coming out of a houſe, with a bag in his hand, which he ſeemed deſirous to conceal. The oddneſs of his appearance, in a country village, joined to an air, that ſeemed to command reſpect, engaged the attention of Lucius, who became curious enough to form a reſolution to know, if poſſible, who he was and what that could be, which he endeavoured to conceal: and, therefore, diſmounting, he led his horſe by the bridle, and followed, at ſome diſtance, till he ſaw him enter a ſmall thatched houſe, and ſhut the door after him. Thither Lucius directed his ſteps, and, on his arrival, was going to knock at the door, when, turning his head to the window, he obſerved the ſame perſon ſtanding before a table, and, with his eyes lift up to heaven, with a look of thankfulneſs, utter a ſeemingly devout ejaculation, and then ſit down by the ſide of an elderly woman. He now gave a rap at the door, with the butt end of his whip, on which, as it happened not to be latched, it immediately flew open, when, to his great aſtoniſhment, he ſaw an earthen plate of grains, ſmoaking on the table, which they endeavoured to conceal, by throwing the end of a rag-

ragged damaſk napkin, which ſerved for a table cloth, over it; and immediately roſe up.

LUCIUS's ſurpriſe was hardly to be expreſſed. Is this, ſaid he, what occaſioned ſuch marks of devotion, ſuch thankfulneſs and gratitude? Was it this that you were ſo deſirous to conceal? Yes, replied the old man; but, why ſhould you rudely preſs to diſcover, what I was unwilling to have known? Why ſhould you thus mortify the little pride that is left me? I beg pardon, ſaid Lucius, for an intruſion, which I cannot juſtify: but ſatisfy my curioſity, and let me know by what terrible diſaſter you are drove to this dreadful extremity. Yet ſtay—let me, firſt, prevail upon you to provide ſome proviſions more fit for human creatures. You muſt have a great mind to be able to ſupport ſuch want, and to rejoice over a meal, that would make others, of leſs piety, repine at providence. Though, in the midſt of affluence, I could almoſt envy your reſignation, that beſpeaks you more than human. Accept of this, Sir, continued Lucius, throwing down five guineas upon the table, and provide ſomething more proper for your refreſhment. The old man, firſt lifting up his eyes to heaven, took up the money, with an air of extreme thankfulneſs,

fulneſs, accompanied with very polite expreſſions of gratitude; and immediately gave one of the pieces to his wife, who preſently returned with ſome beef-ſteaks, and a loaf; however, in this interval, they took their ſeats, and the old man began in the following manner.

I DON'T wonder at your being ſurpriſed at a meal, which, when I was of your age, would have given me equal aſtoniſhment; but want will make us reliſh the coarſeſt fair, and hunger ſweeten the moſt diſagreeable morſel. I was born a gentleman, but ſpent a good fortune in the ſervice of an ungrateful family, and, as I am now perſuaded, in a very bad cauſe. I am a native of Scotland, and was educated in the national religion; but carried away by the heat of youth, and a ſet of ridiculous principles, which I imbibed from ſome of my companions, I ſold my eſtate, and went over into Ireland, and entered, as a volunteer, in king James's army, where I fought in defence of a religion, the moſt oppoſite to my own. But, I muſt do myſelf the juſtice to ſay, that ambition was not my motive. I was preſent at the battle of the Boyne, and in almoſt every battle afterwards, in which my maſter diſtinguiſhed himſelf by a ſuperior cowardice.——But, I will not tire you, with

a repetition of what every body knows alrea. dy. At the battle of Aghrim, when our army was entirely routed, it was with difficulty I made my eſcape; and, as I loſt all my baggage, my fortune, which, before, was almoſt exhauſted, was, by this event, entirely ruined. I returned into Scotland, with a wife and two young children: and pleaſed with the hopes of ſeeing my relations, particularly, a tender father, and a brother, with whom I had been brought up from my infancy, I arrived at Kirkaldy, the place of my birth, where I found that my father died at London, ſome time before. Here, I ſoon experienced, that my wants, inſtead of entitling me to relief, only ſerved as a pretence for treating me with contempt. Nay, my neareſt relations hardly knew me. It was with difficulty, that I got acceſs, even to my brother, though of the ſame political principles with myſelf. I was ſuffered to wait in the hall, like a common ſervant. I was choaked with indignation, yet I ſmothered my reſentment: in ſhort, after only lying a night or two in his houſe, with a barbarity, unknown to ſavages, I, with my wife and children, after many affronts, were civilly turned out of doors, and obliged to ſhift for ourſelves. Strange effect

of

of immoderate ſelf-love! ſaid Lucius; in its extremes, the moſt odious of all the paſſions, and the moſt fruitful of miſchief! How ſtrong muſt it be, when it can thus cancel the ſacred bond of nature, and diſſolve the holy tye of brotherhood! Ay, ay, reply'd the old man, whoever is in want, let him apply to a ſtranger, and he will have no gall poured over the friendly morſel. If he is in diſtreſs, let him fly to his friend, and he will not be humbled with the contumely of a proud relation. I was now a ſtranger in the very town where I was born, and where I had ſpent the greateſt part of my life. Stung to the quick with this indignity, and enraged beyond all poſſibility of bearing the place, my native country became hateful to me. I reſolved to ſet out for England, and had it not been for the humanity of ſome perſons, with whom I had a very ſlender acquaintance, and, particularly, a gentleman, a friend of my father's, who, with a chearful benevolence, that doubled the obligation, ſupplied me with what was neceſſary to bear the expence of my journey; I might, perhaps, have been driven to the extremity of begging my bread,

You ſee, Sir, continued he, that, amidſt the greateſt misfortunes, the contempt of my re-

relations ſtill ſticks neareſt my heart; not that it now gives me any great uneaſineſs, for my affection for them is converted into a calm and ſettled contempt. Yet, were our circumſtances changed, I would ſtill ſerve them to the utmoſt of my power. I would not, indeed, give them my eſteem: this I reſerve for the deſerving.—But I tire you with my reflections.

WE arrived in London, and, by the aſſiſtance of a friend, I entered into trade; but by ridiculouſly lending my note to an acquaintance, the moſt pernicious and deſtructive cuſtom, that ever was introduced amongſt tradeſmen, I was reduced to very great extremities. However, theſe were, at laſt, ſurmounted, and, with a mixture of ſucceſs and misfortune, I continued in the ſame ſtation for upwards of twenty years: and, believe me, Sir, abject as my condition now ſeems, it appears to me, even preferable to the anxiety I then frequently felt, from the fear of duns, the dread of a jail, and the uneaſy apprehenſion, leſt ſome honeſt man ſhould loſe by my misfortunes: the laſt, in particular, was a conſtant ſhock to my humanity, and where the perſon was in low circumſtances, and had a family that, by my means, would be ſufferers, the thought ſtung me to the ſoul, and gave

gave me the moſt pungent anguiſh. Add to this, the many mortifications I received from the purſe-proud tradeſman, whoſe common maxim is, that, *Every man may be rich if he will*; and that frequent breach of veracity, with reſpect to times of payment, which the neceſſity of my affairs ſometimes rendered unavoidable. This laſt, a love of juſtice, and a fixed and ſteady regard for truth, rendered moſt irkſome and painful: in one word, it was a wound feſtering in my conſcience.

AT laſt, I ſold my ſtock, paid my debts, and retired to this place, with my wife and a boy of ten years old. I chearfully maintained my family, by my labour, while my ſtrength laſted, and enjoyed a ſerenity that I cannot remember to have taſted, in the midſt of my early affluence. With a conſcience undiſturbed, and a mind free from care, I applied myſelf to reflection, and ſoftened the fatigue of labour, with large draughts of knowledge, with an improvement in piety, and the ſtudy of virtue and religion. I had before learnt the ways of men, I now took a review of my own. I had long ſince imbibed the philoſophy of the ſchools; I now reduced it to practice, and laying by my Seneca and Epictetus, applied myſelf to the ſtudy of

the ſcriptures, and to open my heart for the reception of thoſe divine truths, which lead the mind to God. Wrapp'd up in a happy ſolitude, I conſider every thing, here below, only as it tends to my eternal welfare, and, while I graſp at an immortality of joy, find but little inconvenience from the coarſeneſs, and indelicacy of my poor repaſt. I have no other aſſiſtance, but what I receive from my dear boy, who is now above twenty. With a filial affection, he forces me to receive a good part of the fruits of his labour; but, alas! that is much too little to find him in cloaths, and us in the means of ſubſiſtence; and I am loth to have my wants known, leſt this ſhould again ſubject me to contempt, and more particularly as it might prejudice his hopes; for he is exceſſively fond of a farmer's daughter, who, though her father is a weak, and no very honeſt man, is very worthy of his affection. We have lived, for ſome time, on thoſe ſallads, which the fields afford; but they are not now to be had: young nettle tops, boiled, were next our daily food; of theſe being tired, I, ſume days ago, taſted ſome freſh grains; I was hungry, and found them palatable, for what will not hunger make ſo? And, as I frequently amuſe myſelf with fiſh-

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ing, by which I, ſometimes, gain a delicious repaſt, I am not ſuſpected of wanting them for my own nouriſhment. This circumſtance affords me no ſmall pleaſure, for all temporal happineſs conſiſts more in the opinion of others, than on what we eat and drink.

I HAVE juſt mentioned my ſon to you, he is a lad of probity and integrity, and, if I may judge, from the preſent you have juſt made me, you are in circumſtances, that will allow you to be of ſervice to him: let me recommend him to your protection.

PITY, Lucius ſays, was the leaſt of all the paſſions which ſeized him, upon hearing this ſtory; his compaſſion gave way to ſurpriſe and admiration: and the graceful manner, with which this truly venerable man expreſſed himſelf, ſtill heightened that eſteem, which was juſtly raiſed, by ſuch exalted piety, ſuch contentment and reſignation. Lucius, therefore, very frankly replied, that he judged right, as to his circumſtance; but that he had not leſs inclination, than ability, to ſerve them all. He deſired his friendſhip. He took him by the hand, and, with the ſtrongeſt expreſſions of eſteem, aſſured him, that he would do him all the ſervice in his power. The ſteaks were now ready, and the good man

aſked him, if he would not do him the honour to partake of a meal, which he himſelf had enabled them to provide. As Lucius had not dined, he, very readily, accepted the invitation, on condition, that he, and his ſon, ſhould dine with him the next day, when they would conſider what could be done for the young man. This was immediately agreed to, and, while they were at table, Lucius deſired him to explain ſeveral paſſages in his ſtory, which he did not perfectly underſtand, and, particularly, what he meant by lending of notes. This being done, the diſcourſe again turned upon the hardſhips he ſuffered, with reſpect to his way of living; hardſhips, which Lucius ſaid, were unknown to the reſt of mankind, and which he could not think of, without expreſſing the moſt lively marks of aſtoniſhment. The good man ſmiled. At firſt, ſaid he, this gave me ſome uneaſy thoughts; but I ſoon learnt to conquer them, and to be thankful for the coarſeſt morſel. I repreſented to myſelf the excruciating tortures, which rack numbers of mankind, and aſked myſelf, what compariſon could be made between exquiſite pain, and a mouthful of unpalatable proviſions: I acknowledged the difrence, and bleſſed the being that made our

caſe

caſe preferable to theirs. The hardſhips endured in ſieges are much greater than ours, for, at the ſiege of Derry, a plate of grains would have been delicious fare. They would have looked upon this as a bleſſing, and ſhall I repine at what would have filled them with joy? Beſides, could I have made my caſe known, which my averſion to the contempt, which always attends poverty, and my regard for my ſon has prevented, we might have lived in a much better manner; for whey, and butter-milk, would not have been refuſed me. My wife and I are both ſatisfied, and thoroughly convinced, that true happineſs does not conſiſt in ſuch trifles as theſe: for, wherever there is inward complacency, humanity of heart, and devout thankfulneſs, there is content, there is the nobleſt felicity.

'Tis very ſtrange, ſaid Lucius; but, whoever calls for aſſiſtance, is ſure to meet with contempt and ſcorn, from every ignorant blockhead. Yet, there is a chain, which runs through all nature, by which every ſpecies of beings have a dependence upon each other. But, let us view only man, that proud being, that, in ſpite of all the cleareſt dictates of reaſon, and all the laws and impulſes of nature, would fain perſuade himſelf that he

ands alone, and free from obligations; wraps himself up in self-sufficiency, and refuses to confer on another, what, he imagines, he does not want himself. The infant no sooner breathes, than, with a puling cry, he proclaims his wants, which the fond mother is, at first, but little able to relieve; he is, therefore, committed to strangers, and receives his first obligations from them. He grows up, and daily demands help from his parents, and, as his years increase, his dependance, and obligations, become more general, even for the means of life, the support of his very being, and the cultivation of his mind; till, at last, he becomes a debtor to thousands. If he is ashamed of this dependance, for the same reason he must be ashamed that he is a man. But if, after this, he refuses his assistance, or contemns him that stands in need of it, he is no longer a man, but a monster.

FINE reasons! fine reasons! cried the old man, smiling; but you will never be able to persuade a miser, that avarice is a greater crime than poverty; or any body else, that to be poor is not to be contemptible. There is no man so stupid, said Lucius, as to believe that poverty is really criminal, or even contemptible: it is, indeed, in their opinion, a

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thing to be dreaded, not that they think it infectious, but for fear they ſhould be aſked for what they cannot give, conſiſtently with their notions of ſelf-love, nor refuſe, without ſome inward commotions, on the ſide of humanity. And, for this reaſon, thoſe, who, from an immoderate and falſe ſelf-love, ſtudy to keep their humanity under, always take care, for their own ſakes, to repreſent poverty to themſelves, as ſomething ridiculous, mean, and contemptible. They are ſenſible of the amiableneſs of the friendly diſpoſitions; and a fear of being ſuſpected to want, either them, or the abilities neceſſary for the exerciſe of them, may, poſſibly, be the principal reaſons, why the rich are aſhamed of their poor relations; as it may be thought, that they themſelves are either not ſo wealthy as is imagined, and, therefore, that *they cannot*, or that they have nothing really amiable in them, and, therefore *will not*, relieve them. A kind of pride, the moſt wicked in itſelf, and the moſt pernicious to ſociety.

THUS we may derive all the calumny that falls upon the unfortunate, from the ſame ſelf-intereſted views; a ſtruggle againſt the ſtrong impreſſions of nature, an endeavour to ſuppreſs the more generous ſentiments of huma-

nity. From my little experience, I have found, that, whenever a man fails, let his probity have been ever ſo conſpicuous, it then becomes neceſſary, that his conduct ſhould be arraigned, and more particularly ſo by his relations, and the ſelf-intereſted amongſt his friends; for where no act of humanity is expected, the man may ſtill remain eſteemed. His virtues, ſuch as induſtry, care, and application, are not what they look for; theſe, therefore, are thrown aſide as uſeleſs lumber: but, if an act of humanity be found, though he was then in a capacity to be generous, it is immediately thrown into the heap of follies; nor is there an indiſcretion in his whole life, that can be thought of, but it is mentioned, to encreaſe the load. No wonder, then, that it becomes enormous. Thus want of ſucceſs, which no mortal can ſecure, is charged as guilt, and the unhappy honeſt man is treated with a hundred times more contempt and obloquy, than the ſucceſsful villain. And ſelf-love, ſhifting the diſgrace further from itſelf, the relations of a huſband throw the greateſt load of blame on his wife, whilſt thoſe, on her ſide, caſt it back on the huſband.

WILL ſhe never have done? methinks, Madam, I hear you ſay. Yes, I anſwer.

But

But you ought to remember, that I have been giving you the hiſtory of a hero in patience, and this ſhould put your ladyſhip in mind, that it does not become you to expreſs much uneaſineſs at ſuch a trifle, as the length of a letter; for I have nothing more to inform you, but that Lucius, having dined heartily, took his leave, and, with the hopes of ſeeing the good man and his ſon, the next day, jogged home. And, therefore, I am at liberty to break off, and ſubſcribe myſelf

YOUR LADYSHIP'S
moſt ſincere friend,
FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXIV.

WELL, Madam, I have now ſeen this venerable old man, whoſe hiſtory I gave you, in my laſt; and, I can aſſure you, he perfectly anſwers the deſcription Lucius gave me of him. His ſon is a well made agreable young fellow, and, though he finiſhed his education in a country village, it ſeems has a good ſhare of learning; but this is not

at all ſurpriſing, as his father was his tutor. His behaviour has too much of the gentleman, for him ever to make a good clown; and he has too much baſhfulneſs to paſs for a gentleman. It was eaſy to ſee that he had never been in ſuch company before; for he bluſhed, whenever he was ſpoke to, and, when he anſwered, it was with as much diffidence, and precaution in placing his words, as if he had been before a magiſtrate. In ſhort, if his ſentiments are at all anſwerable to the ingenuity of his look, he, with his fair Daphne, or Amaryllis, might make a good figure in a paſtoral eclogue.

AFTER dinner, under the pretence of taking a walk in the garden, Lucius conducted us to a neat houſe, juſt on the outſide of the back door, leading into the fields. He aſked the good man how he liked it, and he, as he expected, admiring the ſituation, Lucius, in very polite terms, deſired his acceptance of it for life. Our venerable gueſt received this favour, with all imaginable teſtimonies of gratitude; while his ſon, by his looks, ſeemed in a rapture of joy: and, indeed, as it has only four rooms, that is, two on a floor, it is a manſion proper enough for an anchorite. Beſides, Lucius has promiſed to furniſh it, and I

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am to make him a preſent of as many books, as he ſhall have occaſion for. A catalogue of ſome of which, I have engaged our hermit himſelf to write out for me.

WHILE they were taking a view of this ſmall building, a ſervant came to inform us, that the farmer, who had been here ſome days before, deſired to ſpeak with his maſter. Lucius, immediately, gave orders that he ſhould be admitted; the honeſt man came, and, ſtepping aſide with him, informed him, that the trees, which he had been ordered to watch, were to be removed the next day. At this news, Lucius ſent for Clod, with orders that he ſhould come directly, and bring his counter-leaſe. Lucius had, before, related the whole affair to Mellifont, and he again to a gentleman of the law, who has an eſtate in this part of the country; he ſtrenuouſly aſſerted, that he ought to undergo the penalty mentioned in his contract, that is to pay one hundred pounds, to forfeit his leaſe, and to make good the damage; and that lenity, in this caſe, would be an ill precedent, with reſpect to the other tenants: whilſt Lucius was of opinion, that as the whole affair had been told to him in confidence, his honour would not permit him to proceed to extremi-

ties; and the good old man, to whom he now told the ſtory, without mentioning the farmer's name, was of the ſame opinion; but could not help ſmiling at the ſilly fellow's talking of being paid for his trouble, in cutting down trees that he had no right to meddle with. The converſation then turned on the young man, who was next to be provided for, and being found to be very well qualified for the poſt, he was choſe houſe ſteward, and an apartment aſſigned him in our houſe, conſiſting of a bed-chamber, a parlour, and a little room for an office.

THE joy of the tender parent was now compleat, and tears of gratitude rolled down his venerable cheeks. He lifted up his ſwimming eyes to heaven, and then caſting them down upon us, bleſſed us with an ardour that ſpoke the fulneſs of a heart, loſt in devout thankfulneſs. O little did I think, cried he, of living to ſee ſuch a happy day as this. My God, I thank thee! and, O bleſs my benefactors, as they have been the means of bleſſing me! Here, he took hold of Lucius's hand, and preſſed it between his, then raiſing it up to his lips, I thank you for my dear boy, cried he: I joyfully commit him

to

to your care. May it be always his ſtudy to deſerve your goodneſs.

HERE the young man, finding his good father make a pauſe, ſtepped forwards, and then bowing, Excuſe me, Sir, ſaid he, with a tone that ſeemed to ariſe from a mixture of timorouſneſs, and a joy too big for utterance, if I want words—to expreſs my thankfulneſs—for a favour, greater—vaſtly greater than all my hopes—but—a—my gratitude—my care and my fidelity—ſhall beſt thank you: but what return—Here, he made a long pauſe, and ſeemed quite loſt; when the old man, with a little confuſion in his look, cry'd, You ſee, Sir, the effects of a want of genteel company, my ſon has no illiberal education, nor does he want either ſenſe or words to expreſs himſelf, when among people of a lower claſs, with whom our circumſtances have hitherto permitted him only to converſe. Lucius ſmiled, and clapping the youth on the ſhoulder, with a free and familiar air, ſaid, he would take care to remedy that fault; and this freedom of behaviour ſeemed to have an immediate effect, for, in an inſtant, the young man's confuſion and diſorder ſeemed to vaniſh, and being now pretty well aſſured, prompted by a little female curioſity, I deſired

him

him to give us the particulars of his amour with the farmer's daughter. He bluſhed, and, after a ſhort pauſe, conſented, and, with more aſſurance, and leſs heſitation, though not without fear and trembling, gave us the following account.

WHEN I was about eighteen, as I was riding back from watering my maſter's horſes, they took fright; the horſe I rode on, ran away with me, and haſtily turning ſhort, thro' a gap in the hedge, threw me. I lay ſenſeleſs for ſome time. When I came to myſelf, I hardly knew what had paſs'd; I endeavoured to recollect myſelf, and looking about to ſee where I was, immediately caſt my eyes on a very agreable girl, neatly dreſſed, who was ſitting cloſe by me; ſhe lay half reclined, ſupporting herſelf with one hand on the graſs, while the other, which was ſtretched over my breaſt, held a bottle of ſalts: but my eyes were hardly open when ſhe aroſe, and, taking a ſtep or two backwards, with her looks ſtill fixed on me, told me, with an air of great humanity, that ſhe was glad to ſee me alive, and aſked me how I did. I thanked her, and complained of a violent pain in my head; ſhe was ſorry for it, ſhe ſaid, and wiſhed me a good night. I was then ſitting up, and ſeeing her

her about to go, desired her to stay a little, and accept of my company; but she, modestly, refused me. She told me, she wished me well, and again bid me good night, and, without turning her head, walking away as fast as she could. I still continued sitting in the same posture, when a few drops of blood trickling down my face, I lifted up my hand to wipe them away, and moving it towards the place where I felt the greatest pain, was surprised to find a handkerchief tied round my head, to stop the bleeding of a small wound; for I was so stunned with the fall, that I never perceived it before. I was pleased with the pretty girl's good nature, and the next Sunday, waiting for her coming out of church, having before got the handkerchief washed, returned it with many thanks. She smiled, and told me I was very little obliged to her, since she did no more for me than what she would have done for any other person, in the same condition; and very coldly, but civilly, saying, Your servant, turned away to a young woman, and, taking hold of her arm, prevented my saying any more.

POOR man! said I, laughing, what a disappointment was this! I suppose you were a little mortified at it. No, Madam, reply'd he;

me; indeed, I was not. I had returned the handkerchief, and that was all the view I had in ſpeaking to her. I looked upon her as a deſerving girl: and was pleaſed, that though I had not diſcharged the obligation, I had paid a debt of honour. Here, obſerving me ſmile, Excuſe me, Madam, added he, for making uſe of a word, which, I am ſure, does not become the mouth of ſuch a one as me; but, even plowmen know what honour means, and, though they do not make uſe of the word, obſerve what is meant by it. Lucius ſaid he was in the right, and deſired him to proceed, without minding my looks. On which he reſumed.

As I had, frequently, an opportunity of ſeeing her, this calm eſteem made me ſometimes ſingle her out for converſation. I overtook her, by accident, in the fields, going a milking, I walked her pace, and ſometimes, when ſhe was returning back, carried her milk-pail: and, by this means, I, inſenſibly, learnt from her mind, what I ought to feel in my own. The modeſt ſimplicity of her actions, the innocency of her looks, and the goodneſs of her heart, which was ſure to be affected, whenever an object of compaſſion was near, were thoſe charms, which I could not reſiſt, and they would

would, indeed, have been too much for me, had her good ſenſe been leſs remarkable. I was ſoon convinced that what ſhe had done for me was purely the effect of her good nature. For a long time, ſhe ſtrove to avoid me, ſo that it was by ſlow degrees, I learn't her value. She began to have an eſteem for me. I thought I deſerved no other character than that of her friend; I told her ſo, and ſhe was not diſpleaſed. Innocent in all, ſhe had no idea of love, nor was the name mentioned. At ſheep-ſhearing, at the wakes, and at harveſt home, ſhe was conſtantly invited by my maſter's daughters. and I joined in the jovial merriment. Our eſteem for each other encreaſed, till, at laſt, it ripened into love. And, when this was known to ourſelves, we were frighted at the difficulties which lay before us; ſhe told me her ſtory, and perſuaded me never to ſee her more.

HER mother a woman of ſenſe, and very fond of books, took care of her infancy, and gave her too a taſte for reading, and embelliſhed her mind with many uſeful hints, on the excellency of a virtuous character; but ſhe ſoon died, and left her to the management of a weak and hard-hearted father, who marrying a woman, much younger than himſelf

ſelf, ſuffered her to be treated with the greateſt inhumanity. But, I will not trouble you with the ſeverities ſhe told me ſhe met with from a wretch of no principles, a cruel ſtep-mother, whoſe delight it was to give her uneaſineſs. Her aunt was enraged to ſee her ſiſter's child treated ſo ill; ſhe took her home, and it was at her houſe ſhe lived, when I uſed to have the pleaſure of ſeeing her. An uncle of hers, who reſided in London, has lately left her a hundred pounds, which is all her fortune; for though her father is reckoned to be worth between three and four hundred pounds, ſhe has no expectations from him, as he has now a child by his ſecond wife, who rules him as ſhe pleaſes.

I HAVE not ſeen her this month, except at church; but with what reluctance I have ſubmitted to this, no words can expreſs. I thought her above me. I feared to bring upon her the reproaches of her relations, who, to be ſure would never conſent to our happineſs: to her marrying ſo poor a man: one ſo much beneath her. But your generoſity, Sir, has removed this obſtacle. I am in raptures when I think of it. How ſhall I expreſs my gratitude? How deſcribe a joy, which no words

can

can point? It is too much! you are too good, and I am too happy!

WELL, Madam, was I not in the right to repreſent this innocent youth as a perſon proper to make a ſhining figure in a paſtoral? But you ſee he is above the rank of the Hobbinol of Gay, and would better ſuit the more dignified character of Pope's, or Phillips's, gentle ſwains, who, with a greater dignity of ſentiment, attune the warbling pipe to more lofty, more graceful, and harmonious numbers.

ABOUT an hour after this, the man returned with Clod; Mr Manly, without the leaſt deſign of alarming the farmer, had, inadvertently, ſent Robin for him; whom he no ſooner ſet his eyes on, than he recollected that he had ſeen him before: and being told it was his maſter that went in to drink with him, after he had bought a load of hay, he was in a moſt terrible fright: he, therefore, came trembling, and entered the hall, where Mr. Manly had ſeated himſelf to receive him, with the air of a man going to receive ſentence of death, and having made an awkward bow, as he came in, ſlunk into a corner. He was deſired to come forwards, which he did very ſlowly, looking downwards, and knitting his brows, and then

ſtood

ſtood before the awful little man, with a fear that made his lips quiver with a convulſive motion. When he was aſked how his wife did, and whether ſhe ſtill continued the ſame ſubmiſſive creature, he had repreſented her; he looked very ſilly, and, ſcratching his head, anſwered, Yes. Then you are your own maſter, ſaid he again, you are above being ruled by your wife, and, as you make her keep her diſtance, ſhe muſt not preſume to adviſe or direct you, in any thing that does not concern her. Yes, was anſwered again. Then, rejoin'd Lucius, you take the whole blame, and all the guilt, of this affair upon yourſelf. I find I was miſtaken; I thought you might have been teaſed into it, by the importunity of a wicked woman; a crime that would have admitted of ſome alleviation, and, then, though you would have more weakneſs, yet you would have leſs guilt.

THE man ſtared, and bit his lips, and, at laſt, ſtammering, cry'd, But—but—but ſhu did perſuade me to fell the trees, or I had no' done it. Shu does what ſhu pleaſes wi' me, and I conno' help it. I thowt no harm.—— Thought no harm! cry'd Lucius, what is there no harm in robbing your landlord? Ay, ay, cried the man, there is harm enough in that.

that. But, I mean, I thought no harm in telling you ſuch woundy lees about my wife, for I am aſheam'd, and wud no' ha' people think me ſuch an old foo'; yet I love her for aw that. I find, however, ſaid Lucius, with a magiſterial air, your word is not to be taken; but produce your counter-leaſe. He now pulled it out of his pocket, and, with a look, that ſhewed him ready to ſink with fear, gave it to Lucius, who juſt caſt his eye on the preamble, and returning it, ordered him to read it himſelf: but that was impoſſible; for, after he had read two or three ſhort words, and ſpelt a long one, Lucius obſerved, that his hand ſhook to ſuch a degree, that he would never be able to go through with it.

I WAS ſtanding all this while in a gallery that, leading to ſome chambers, croſſes the hall; and, looking very attentively over the iron rails, was liſtening, and, at the ſame time, contemplating on my Sancho, ſeated below me, in his two-arm'd chair; that formidable appearance, which ſtruck ſuch terror into the ſelf-condemned farmer. Juſt at this time, the venerable old man, whoſe name I might have told you before is Trueman (but ſince I tell you ſo now, it is as well) entered with his ſon, and looking ſtedfaſtly at the far-

farmer, ſtepped up to Lucius, and deſired to ſpeak a word with him in private. He aroſe from the ſeat of juſtice, and walking aſide they whiſpered for half a minute, and then the old man, in great haſte, ran out of the hall. The judge ſeemed pleaſed, gave a nod, which ſignified a kind of aſſent, and, returning to his ſeat, took the leaſe, and giving it to young Trueman, deſired him to read it, which he had no ſooner done, than Lucius began. Here you find, that you have not only forfeited your leaſe: but, beſides, are to pay me an hundred pounds, over and above the value of the trees you have unlawfully cut down.

AT this inſtant, the gentle Mrs. Clod, with a child in her arms, burſt into the hall, and, without the leaſt regard to any body preſent directed her diſcourſe to her huſband. Ah ye foo', ye blockhead, yo! cried ſhe as loud as ſhe cou'd baul: ſee what you han browt us to. This is yo'r wiſe doings, ye oaf yo! Old Clod now looked more aghaſt than ever, and, with his eyes fixed on his wife, who ſtood behind him, deſired her to hold her tongue: but ſhe, lifting up her fiſt, replied, with great fury, Hold my tongue, ye villain! hold my tongue ſee this poor baby: Ye unnatural brute. Yo ha' ruined us aw, ye have! Clod,

obſerving her fiſt held up in a menacing poſture, and hearing theſe ungrateful ſounds, with his head ſtill turned behind him, ſidled nearer and nearer to Lucius, as the leſs terrible object of the two; who, aſſuming a moſt haughty air, commanded her to be ſilent, at which, ſhe running forwards, and puſhing between Lucius and her huſband, (when, in an inſtant, thoſe eyes, which before ſhot lightening, now let fall a plenteous ſhower,) bluber'd very diſmally, and begged him to pity her, and that poor, pretty, dear, ſweet, helpleſs baby; and inſiſted, that though it was no great matter what became of ſuch a wicked man, ſuch a vile rogue, as her huſband, yet it would be the greateſt cruelty to ruin her, and ſo fine a child, ſo ſweet a wench, as that ſhe held in her arms. But, alas! the judge was deaf to all ſhe could ſay; he order'd a ſervant to turn her out of doors; but ſhe fell on her knees, and, with great earneſtneſs, endeavoured to perſuade him to ſuffer her to ſtay. This favour, at laſt, was granted, only upon condition of ſilence; which was no ſooner done, than Clod, ſeeming to revive and recover ſpirits, from his indignation, cry'd out, I could no' ha' thowt it: ſhu wud ha' me into jail: well, I'll ſee who ſhall ſuffer; I ha' another

ther dowter, and her mother wud na' ha' ſerv'd me ſo.

LUCIUS now repreſented the heinouſneſs of the crime, and inſiſted upon the penalty: and ordering young Trueman to fill up a bond which he had before ſent for, the farmer ſigned it with leſs reluctance than I could have imagined, only repeating a curſe or two on his wife, loud enough for her to hear, and crying, I'll be her foo' no longer, I ha' another dowter.

THE filling up of the bond took up ſome time, for our young ſteward was not yet very expert at his buſineſs, and his father was not there to aſſiſt him: but the ceremony of ſigning and ſealing was hardly over, when the good old man entered, introducing an elderly woman, and a very pretty young woman of about ſeventeen, whom he led to Lucius. Our judge aroſe, and bow'd, and, at the ſame inſtant, farmer Clod cry'd out, My poor dowter! and young Trueman dropp'd an ink ſtandiſh, which he was carrying into his office. Clod's wife now gave them all a curſe, and grumbling left the place, while he ſeized one of the girl's hands, and throwing his other arm about her neck, gave her a hearty ſmack; crying, I am o'moſt ruined; but no

matter, I deſerve it. Will yo forgi' me, wench? Yo are my dowter, and yo ſhall be my dowter, in ſpite of the devil. Young Trueman had, during this ſpeech, ſeized her other hand, which Clod had neither power nor reſolution to prevent, and which, with an air of native innocence, ſhe chearfully reſigned to her lover. Her eyes were, in an inſtant, turned from her father, and fixed, with greater ſoftneſs, on the young man, who gaz'd on her, with a look of mingled tenderneſs and rapture.

This, Madam, was a ſcene, which, at firſt, I could not comprehend, and ſo ſtrange a turn filled me at once with curioſity, and held me in an agreeable ſuſpenſe: but it was a curioſity too violent to ſuffer me to continue, at a diſtance, an unintereſted ſpectator. I, therefore, ran down ſtairs, when old Trueman, with the elderly woman, having joined themſelves to Lucius, to whom they were talking, and accidently fronting the other three, I could not help ſaying, with a laugh, Well, if after all you are diſpoſed for a country dance, I hope, I may be allowed to make one. They all ſmiled, and, after the uſual ceremony, of a few bows and curteſies,

and your humble ſervant, and the like, Lucius addreſſed himſelf again to Clod.

You have now performed, ſaid he, the conditions I demanded, nor ſhall I make any reflections on what is paſſed, ſince this would expoſe you before your relations. My thoughts are now taken up with the general happineſs of your whole family. If I inſiſted ſo ſtrenuouſly on your paying the fine, it was only with a view, to ſecure ſome part of the fortune of a daughter, whom you have neglected; and by giving the bond to this young man, whom you muſt now look upon as your ſon, I return it again into the ſame family; ſince, as my ſteward, he does not need this to make him an advantageous match for your daughter. Here Clod, without ſtirring a ſtep, ſtretched out his neck, to ſtare at Trueman; and ſeeming, more and more, to recover himſelf, drew his daughter back a little, crying, A proper mon; hay, wench. Gi' me yo'r hand; which Trueman doing, he gave it a hearty ſhake, ſaying, God bleſs yo' together. I wiſh it with aw my heart. Shu is a good wench; I'll ſay that for her. And then, turning to Lucius, bowed ſo low, and gave ſuch a ſcrape, that he had like to have fallen upon his face. The young woman bluſhed, and curteſied; and

and Lucius having, by this time, found the bond, which he pulled out of his pocket, preſented it to Trueman, ſaying, Here take this, and I wiſh you all imaginable happineſs; while he received it with a look of gratitude and joy. Lucius reſumed, I am ſenſible that what you told me was in confidence: I, therefore, remit of the rigour of my firſt demand. I return you your counter-leaſe, and ſhall ſell the trees myſelf; I only deſire you to ſet the ſame number of plants in their room. Ay, marry will I (cried he, as he received it) and as many more to boot, and rot me if ever ſhu mak me ſuch a rogue again. Now nothing was heard, but joy and congratulations. The young woman's aunt (for that was the perſon that came in with her) as ſhe loved her niece, was very liberal of her thanks and acknowledgments; ſhe kiſſed the young couple, and inſiſted on providing the wedding dinner, as ſoon as they could be aſked in due form at church. For, as ſhe was no friend to licenſes, ſhe was reſolved that the marriage ſhould not be performed till after this ceremony was compleated, which ſhe thought neceſſary to render it valid. The happy couple were the leaſt tumultuous in their joy, for that was principally expreſſed, on both ſides, by the eloquent

language of the countenance, which, ſufficiently, told us all they could have uttered; and, perhaps, they choſe that we ſhould rather ſee than hear the expreſſions of their mutual tenderneſs: but it is more probable, that, wholly taken up with the preſence of each other, they never thought of us at all, and while they were ſilent, did not ſuſpect that any in the company could underſtand a language, which they, doubtleſs, imagined peculiar to themſelves. But it was not ſo with old Clod, who knew no other way of expreſſing his joy, than by capering about the hall, bleſſing the ſquire and his good lady, kiſſing his daughter, and hugging young Trueman. In ſhort, we adjourned into a parlour; when wine, ale, and tea, were called for, which every one partook of as they pleaſed. Nor was the cold ſir-loin forgot, which, by antient cuſtom, is a joint devoted to hoſpitality; for this was placed on a ſide-board, near the farmer, whoſe uneaſineſs having coſt him a dinner, he wiſely, upon the return of his ſpirits and his ſtomach, did not ſuffer it to ſtand neglected. At laſt, they all took their leave, but not till our young ſteward had ſhewn his intended bride her future apartment, which Lucius, in the preſence of the aunt, promiſed ſhould

be

be immediately furniſhed for their reception.

You ſee, Madam, that innocence and peace do not always bleſs the cottage: vice ſometimes finds an entrance under the loweſt roof; and care and ſorrow can hover over the brow of humble virtue. With theſe ſage remarks, which inform you of nothing but what you knew before, I conclude my letter, having no more to add, but that I am, and ſhall ever be,

YOUR LADYSHIP'S
moſt affectionate friend,
FELICIA MANLY.

P. S. Upon recollection, I think, I ought not to have informed you, that the wicked woman, who makes no inconſiderable character in the above letter, is a ſtep-mother: but ſurely you will not do me the injury to ſuſpect that, by inſerting it, I would inſinuate a reflection upon others, who, with the name, have quite different diſpoſitions. A certain lady, whom you dearly love, and to whom your couſin owes ten thouſand obligations, is a glorious exception; and I know ſome other ladies, beſides Miſs Biddy, who, from a mother-in-law, have received all the tender indul-

gences, and all the obligations they could reaſonably expect from a real parent. If you ſhew your aunt this letter, as I find you have done ſome others, don't let her overlook this poſtſcript.

LETTER XXXV.

DEAR MADAM,

YOU ſee what a variety of impertinencies, your deſire of frequently hearing from me, has forced me to commit; but what elſe can be expected from rural ſcenes, which, though the haunt of lovers, are the moſt unfruitful of intrigues: for where almoſt every one acts from nature, nothing of the marvellous can be expected. Yet I ſhall now open a ſcene of wonders, that will give you the greateſt aſtoniſhment.

ONE day laſt week, to our no ſmall ſurpriſe, we received a preſſing invitation to dine with Mr. Stevens, the ſprightly old gentleman, whoſe * character you were ſo well pleaſed with, and whom we had not ſeen, ſince the diſgrace of his ſuperlatively pious ſiſter † Prudilla. Our deſire of renewing the acquaintance

* See Letter IV. Letter VIII. † Letter XIX.

ance of ſo agreeable a companion, made us readily comply with his requeſt. Lucius, therefore, ordered the coach to be immediately got ready, and we ſet out ſoon after.

UPON our arrival, we were received by the gentleman himſelf, with his uſual affability and freedom; but with leſs of that humorous gaity in his look, which indicates the friend, and chearful companion. After paying us ſome handſome, tho' late, compliments on our nuptials, he informed us, that his ſiſter, who, he confeſſed, had injured us in his eſteem, being now dangerouſly ill of a conſumption, deſired to ſee us, that ſhe might unburthen her mind, as much as poſſible, by confeſſing her guilt, and endeavouring to obtain our pardon; and that, as ſhe was now awake, if we pleaſed, he would introduce us himſelf. We immediately conſented, and followed him to her chamber. We found her ſeated in an eaſy chair, one arm hanging negligently down by the ſide, which, by its thinneſs, ſeemed immoderately long. She was worn to a ſkeleton; her head leaning back, in a languid poſture, diſcovered a thin, pale, and dejected countenance, which, the moment ſhe raiſed it, expreſſed all the ſigns of inward confuſion, horror, and guilt. She fixed her eyes on us, ſighed, and

waving her hand, deſired us, with a weak voice, to ſit down by her, which we immediately did; when Mr. Stevens left us, and, before he ſhut the door, aſſured his ſiſter, that he would take care that no body ſhould come to interrupt us.

WHAT an object was here! How wretchedly depraved muſt that mind be, that could triumph before an enemy ſo reduced, ſo humble, and ſo worthy of pity! Lucius could not: his concern was extremely viſible, and, though I never ſaw him in a more ſprightly humour, than he was in the whole morning, it was now inſtantly vaniſhed; and his countenance had an air of ſolemn gravity, and compaſſion. With a tone of great humanity, he aſk'd how ſhe did. She, thanking him, anſwered, I am extremely ill. O, Sir, I am going—I am going to that being, who will not be impoſed upon by falſe appearances. Oh the horrors of a guilty mind! Oh conſcience! Conſcience!—I have plotted your ruin—I have endeavoured to deſtroy your peace—your fortune—your happineſs here—your ſoul hereafter. Then, wiping her eyes, Oh, I aſk your pardon,—Can you forgive me? Can you?—Will you? This was ſpoke with ſuch a beſeeching look, and uttered with ſo much earneſtneſs,

neſtneſs, that it would have been barbarous to have kept her any longer in ſuſpenſe. Lucius, therefore, immediately reply'd, in that tender tone, which nature gives to the voice, when the heart is deeply affected with compaſſion, Yes, Madam, I heartily forgive you: But why this eagerneſs? Do you think me incapable of pity? No, Sir, added ſhe, I know you are not: but alas! you know not what you ſay!—You don't know how much I have been your enemy—but don't—don't withdraw your forgiveneſs, continued ſhe, looking ſtedfaſtly in his face; and then caſting her eyes on the ground, added: It was I that cauſed your father to be arreſted: It was I—I that perſuaded his creditors to throw him in a jail. How! cry'd Lucius, reddening; and then, after a moment's reflexion, reſumed with a ſigh; Well! this is not a time for reproaches. Reproaches! cry'd ſhe; I deſerve them all—I know I deſerve them all, and am prepared to receive them. O Madam! I loved Lucius, with a criminal paſſion, and, under a veil of ſanctity, thought to conceal myſelf from the eyes of the world; but I could not do it from the all-piercing eye of heaven.—But my plots were diſcovered, and you were a witneſs of the ſhameful, but juſt, treatment I met with,

at your aunt's, when all my contrivances to break the match betwixt you and this gentleman were laid open. Your aunt's reproaches ſharpened the ſting of my guilty conſcience; your and your couſin's triumph over me, made my mind boil with rage and ſhame, and diſappointed love. I retuned home,—I contrived ways of revenge, and ſought ſtill to deſtroy your peace. At laſt, I thought of Mr. Manly. I knew ſome of his creditors, I flew to them, and, under a pretence of viſiting their wives, indulged the malice of this wicked heart. This, at firſt, was all my view: but ſoon, Madam, I recollected that your huſband had a tender and generous mind: I hoped his duty, and his affection, to his father, would be too ſtrong for his paſſion for you — I hoped he would relieve him, and I was not deceived: I prepared to let your father know that he was an impoſtor, that he had greatly leſſened his fortune: and, by this means, thought myſelf again infallibly certain of breaking the match: but ſoon I learned that theſe hopes were vain: Lucius had himſelf informed him of the whole affair: —he was forgiven, and I plunged in freſh deſpair.—O Lucius! I durſt not now ſee your father.—Oh a guilty conſcince! a guilty conſcience!—Crime followed crime, till I ſinned be-

beyond all hopes of mercy. 'Tis an ingenuous confeſſion, however, cry'd Lucius, and I heartily forgive you.—May God forgive you too. I'll promiſe for my father. I thank you, ſaid ſhe, and ſtopp'd, and then continuing ſilent for ſome time, ſhe, at laſt, fixed her eyes on Lucius, and reſumed. I have another affair, but I cannot mention it to you.—I cannot ſpeak of it—but, as it is more neceſſary to be diſcovered than any thing I have yet ſaid, I have wrote it down.—Here look at this paper—read my ſhame, and then let me ſpeak to you alone. You will know it time enough, Madam. I can ſcarcely think of it before you, and muſt, therefore, beg of you to retire.

You won't wonder, Madam, that I was very much ſurprized at this propoſal, which appeared the more extraordinary, by her manner of introducing it. What could I think? It had an odd appearance. Lucius ſeemed thoroughly ſenſible of this, and, therefore, endeavoured to detain me. This is very ſtrange, cried he: What concern can I have of any ſecret affair of yours, which my Felicia may not be acquainted with? Or, what can that be, which is fit only for me, and not for her to know? Dear Madam, dear Sir, oblige me, cried ſhe with an earneſtneſs that pleaded

more than her words: ſurely this requeſt cannot be hard for your to grant! Lucius made no anſwer, but, receiving the paper, went to the window to read it. As ſhe ſat with her back to the light, he might do it as ſafely here as in another room, without raiſing her bluſhes, by the diſorder of his looks; and, perhaps, her chair was ſet in this manner on purpoſe. Mean while I aroſe, and walking out of the room, pulled the door after me, which I had hardly done, when I heard Lucius ſtamp, and cry out, I a child by you, Madam, 'tis falſe. 'Tis a notorious lye. And then, running to the door, deſired me to come in, with a look that ſhewed him in a moſt violent paſſion. It ſeems, added he, that this important affair, ſo improper for you to hear, is what you have an immediate concern in; ſhe has the impudence to ſay here—but read it yourſelf. What a vile ſcandalous lye---I a child by her!

As I was but juſt on the outſide of the door, when he called me, I immediately returned; and, being much leſs diſturbed than he, had the precaution to ſhut it, as I entered the room. I muſt confeſs that I was in a very queer ſituation of mind: I was far from being eaſy. But it is impoſſible for me to give you any idea of Lucius's behaviour: he ſtamped,

ed, he ſtared, his colour changed from a deep ſcarlet, to a livid paleneſs; and then looking towards the chair, with rage and contempt ſtrongly painted in his countenance, Is this your repentance? cried he, wicked and abandoned wretch!—In ſuch a condition too!——Your affectation of modeſty!—my wife muſt not know it!——you can't ſpeak of it before her! Why ſo warm, my dear? replied I, with a ſmile: if there is nothing in it, it can only ſerve to encreaſe our deteſtation of a wretch that, ſo near her death, could be guilty of ſo vile a ſlander. *If!* cried he, with a ſnappiſh haſtineſs: It is an abſolute lye—ſhe is the laſt woman that I would be guilty of ſuch an affair with—ſuch an antidote to deſire!—I ſhould be as much aſhamed of my taſte as of the crime.

WE were now alarmed by an affair of a very different kind; for Prudilla, who had heard every word, unable to ſupport the ſhock of being treated in ſo ſevere a manner, at this inſtant, fainted away, and fell out of her chair, and we beheld a pale, and almoſt lifeleſs being, lie ſtretched out on the hearth, in a manner that called for immediate relief. To what ſtrange revolutions is the human mind ſubject? Not all our indignation,

not

not all the fury of paſſion, could prevent our running immediately to her aſſiſtance, and giving her that ſuccour that her caſe required. Lucius raiſed her head from under the grate, where ſhe was in danger of being burnt, and, with my aſſiſtance, lifted her into her chair, and there held her, whilſt I ran to call her brother. He came; but it was near half an hour before we brought her to herſelf. At laſt, ſhe opened her eyes, and her brother forced her to drink a glaſs of wine and hartſhorn; but ſhe no ſooner recovered her ſpirits, than ſhe burſt into tears; nor could ſhe utter any thing, but ſighs, for a conſiderable time, endeavouring all the while to conceal her bluſhes, by covering her face. At laſt, ſhe deſired her brother to leave us, and, when he was gone, not a word was ſpoke for near two minutes more. For ſhe was ſo weak, that Lucius, dreading ſome ill conſequence might again attend his not being able to maſter his temper, reſolved to let her begin firſt; and to wait, with patience, till he could hear what ſhe had to ſay, in vindication of this *notorious lye*, as he called it. This he let me know, as ſoon as Mr. Stevens left the room; by writing his reſolution on a piece of paper, which he eaſily did, as there was a pen and ink upon the table, which

ſtood

ſtood cloſe at his elbow. I began to be tired of this ſuſpenſe, when ſhe began, with a deep ſigh: Now you know my ſhame; but I did not think I ſhould be treated in this manner. Oh you are very cruel, you might have read the paper out.—Is it not falſe? cried Lucius; had you ever a child by me?—Pray let me go on, ſaid ſhe, you ought, indeed, to have read the paper out, before you fell into ſuch a paſſion.———Did not I read one lye at the beginning? interrupted he again; to what purpoſe ſhould I read on to find more? Hear me, hear me, rejoin'd ſhe, I take the ſhame and guilt upon myſelf, why ſhould you not then hear me? You lay at our houſe, about two years ago, twice you lay here; if you remember, it rained, and you could not go home. Oh! how ſhall I tell the reſt? You was waked by a woman in your bed. Lucius bluſhed, and looked at me, and immediately replied, I acknowledge it, Madam; but proceed. I left you while you were aſleep.—I was gone before it was light, and the firſt time you lay here, you found our chamber-maid's handkerchief lying by the ſide of the bed; which, the next morning, ſhe owned. The odiouſneſs of my crime made me glad to conceal it; I bluſhed at my own wickedneſs,

neſs, and, to preſerve my character, left the handkerchief.

I own it all, Madam, cried Lucius; and I ſincerely beg your pardon. Indeed, I ought not to have been ſo warm: but I beg you would forgive a language, which, I acknowledge, did not become me. My ſuſpicion fell where you intended it ſhould; but how barbarous, how ungenerous, was it in you, to ſully the character of an innocent creature, by laying your guilt to her charge! If that be ſo great a fault, returned ſhe, I have much to anſwer for: Oh I am a guilty creature! but the ſhame I then felt for my faults, though it prompted me to do all I could to hide them, though it made me bluſh in private, and almoſt hate myſelf, was nothing to the horror I now feel. Pray, Madam, ſaid I, proceed with your ſtory, I long to hear what is become of the child. Lucius, Madam, may remember, continued ſhe, that I went to London, about four months after the laſt time he lay at our houſe; there, inſtead of viſiting my friends, I lived very retired, and, pretending that my huſband was gone abroad, was well reſpected, and, at laſt, brought to bed of a fine girl. After my return home, I ſent for it into the country, and it is now at Cliſton,

where it paſſes for the child of a poor woman, whom I had taken a fancy to, and reſolved to keep out of charity. In that paper is a direction where to find it, and in that paper too, you will ſee that I have left this living witneſs of my ſhame ſeven thouſand pounds, which is all my fortune; and if ſhe dies, it is to be equally divided between you and my brother: for you are the perſon I love deareſt, and have moſt injured. But my brother will ſhow you my will; he has conſented to every thing, and, therefore, I have choſen him and you for my executors.—But I am quite ſpent.---I hope I ſhall ſee you after dinner.---This we promiſed, and retired.

I DON'T know, Madam, whether I can vindicate to myſelf, my thus laying open a ſecret affair, that reflects ſo much upon the character of my dear Lucius. How triumphantly you cry out, O the man of immaculate virtue, the modeſt, the ſober, the religious Lucius!---in bed with a ſuperannuated old maid---mighty pretty, who could have thought it? ---But, however you exclaim, I know you will be pleaſed, to find him a little lower in your eſteem; or elſe what is become of all your pretty hints, "that he was too good to "be married---that you ſhould not like a huſband

"band ſo extremely perfect——and that you "thought it neceſſary that a man, who was "to be your companion for life, ſhould have "ſome faults, that he might be better able to "excuſe yours."——Think of this, and ceaſe your exclamations. As to Prudilla's conduct, it is vaſtly more inexcuſeable: but I conſider her as an humble penitent, and, therefore, ſhall not expatiate on her crimes. I have been melted by her tears; I have heartily forgiven her, and this has made me omit ſeveral ſpeeches, which had I inſerted, though they might have kept up the enthuſiaſtic part of her character, would have weakened your pity, by making her appear ridiculous.

I HAVE the honour to be, Madam,

YOUR LADYSHIP'S

moſt ſincere,

and moſt affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

DEAR MADAM,

WE had ſtaid ſo long with Prudilla, that, when we went down, we found the dinner almoſt ſpoiled; for Mr. Stevens, imagining that this might be the laſt time of our ſeeing her alive, was not willing to interrupt us, being very ſenſible that we had affairs upon our hands of much greater moment.

THE cloth was no ſooner taken away, than Mr. Stevens, having lighted his pipe, addreſſed himſelf to Lucius, and told him, that his ſiſter had deſired him to ſhew him the will, before it was ſealed up. You know already, I ſuppoſe ſaid he, that you and I are appointed her executors, and I don't doubt but ſhe has told you in what manner ſhe has diſpoſed of her fortune. Tell me now honeſtly, don't you think my ſiſter out of her ſenſes? Self-intereſt, perhaps, may biaſs me, but you are an unprejudiced perſon: therefore, let me know what you think of her leaving ſeven thouſand pound to a ſtranger. Had ſhe left it to a female friend, to you, or any other man of merit, I ſhould not have cared, I would not have troubled myſelf at it's going out of the family; but to leave it to a little

little brat, that can but juſt go alone—Pox! it's enough to make one mad. Here he began to puff, as if he had a mind to ſmother us and, in an inſtant, we were ſurrounded with a cloud of ſmoke. Lucius ſeemed extremely confounded; when, to give him time to think of a proper anſwer, I replied, She has taken a fancy to the child, I ſuppoſe; perhaps, it may belong to ſomebody very dear to her. A fancy, Madam, cried he, it is a very odd fancy, that ſhe who never in her life could endure children, ſhould, at theſe years, take ſuch a fancy to one, as to leave it all ſhe is worth. I, very bluntly, told her ſo, and, as I refuſed to have any thing to do in this affair, without better reaſons than ſhe was pleaſed to yield me, ſhe referred me to you, to give me ſatisfaction. That I can eaſily do, ſaid Lucius; you are her brother, and I have a right to know the whole affair, which I, though moſt concerned, was ignorant of, till this morning: Suppoſe the child ſhould be her own. Why ay, cry'd the old man, after a ſhort ſilence, and then deliberately, pouring out a mighty cloud, which he had been collecting from the time Lucius began to ſpeak—there is ſomething in that, indeed: but how could ſhe, who is ſo curſed modeſt, that ſhe could not mention it to her own

bro-

brother, tell it you? Who ſhould ſhe tell it to, but to the child's father, ſaid I? The child's father! he rejoined, holding his pipe in his hand and ſtaring, with a look of the utmoſt aſtoniſhment; what Lucius the child's father! he! the modeſt Lucius! my young philoſopher! he make a whore of my ſiſter! Do you know, young man, added he, what you deſerve, for doing our family this honour? Suppoſe I ſhould order my fellows to cool your courage in the horſe-pond, ſhould not I ſerve you right? Hay, tell me that, you young dog? Could you find no body, but my ſiſter, to make a whore of? A woman old enough to be your mother, ye little whelp! So you muſt come here preaching your damned nonſenſe, about virtue, and honour, and the devil knows what; and I, like an old fool, muſt ſit liſtening and hugging you to my boſom, while you forſooth, was only waiting for an opportunity to debauch my ſiſter. Here he ſtarted up, crying the horſe-pond! Ay, and it ſhall be the horſe-pond, if it coſt me a thouſand pounds. By the lord Harry, I'll make a fous'd mackrel of him.

Lucius, who, at firſt, ſat with a kind of puſillanimous ſhame, as perhaps, imagining, that as Mr. Stevens thought him the aggreſſor,

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he had an undoubted right to complain; now ſtarted from his chair, and ſtepping between him and the door, locked it, and put the key in his pocket; then turning haſtily round, and clapping his hand to his ſword, which he drew half out of the ſcabbard, he cried, Hold, Sir, I ſhall take upon me to ſecure the door; you muſt not go out without my leave; how far I have injured either you or your ſiſter, ſhe may, if ſhe pleaſes, inform you; for, I think it beneath me to palliate any fault of mine, by laying it upon her. This was ſpoke in a reſolute tone; but, the old man, not ſeeming to mind what he ſaid, having his whole thoughts taken up with his poſture, cried out, There is a young philoſopher now! A pretty fellow to make me a priſoner in my own houſe; and then caſting his eyes on the glittering ſteel, Well done, Don John; There is a dog for you now! He has lain with the ſiſter, and now would murder the brother! A fine philoſopher!—But I won't draw—I'll ha' none of your cold iron in my guts—I'd ſee both you and ſiſter at old Nick firſt——Then wheeling about upon his heel, he added,—You ſhall as ſoon roaſt as ſpit me.

THE moment Lucius ran to the door, I flew to the window, and throwing open the

the ſaſh, call'd Robin and John: but hearing the old man declare his averſion to cold iron, I drew in my hand, and was going to ſhut the window, when he came to me, and putting out his head, firſt threw away his pipe, and then called out Sam and Harry: but we both called in vain; for, as we found afterwards, they were all drinking together in the cellar, with the butler. I was, all this while, fretting, trembling, and blaming my ſelf, as the cauſe of all this diſturbance, by the imprudent manner in which I had diſcovered the affair; and was the more uneaſy, as I thought Lucius had ſufficient reaſon to be offended: and this reflection was ſo painful, that ſtupid with vexation, for ſome time I had not the power of contriving any probable means of ſetting all right again. At laſt, I recollected the paper which Prudilla had given to Lucius, and he to me; and, as the old man was ſtill leaning upon my ſhoulder, and calling for his ſervants, I deſired him to be pacified, and told him that, on condition he would ſit down and be eaſy, I would convince him that Mr Manly was much leſs to blame than he imagined. Mr. Steyens, finding that it was to no purpoſe to expect any aſſiſtance from his ſervants, readily complied; and, ſeating himſelf

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in the window, while Lucius took a chair next the door, I gave him the paper, saying, Here, Sir, is a short account of the whole affair, written by her own hand. He took it, and mumbling to himself, utter'd now and then an articulate sound, making his remarks to himself as he went on. *Blushes——die with shame——*and then, raising his voice, *Be surprised to hear that you have had a child by me*—Be surprised to hear it! cry'd he. What the duce! did he get her with child in his sleep! —*remember—asleep*—Ay, it must be so.—— Here he burst out a laughing, crying, Well, this is very extraordinary!—Get a child in his sleep!—No, that can't be it neither; for she says, *he remember'd it.* Well, let's see, O I have it; *a woman came to bed to him in his sleep*—Ay, that may be; but she did not get him with child, I hope—*Early in the morning —dark*—The duce! what a rare modest sister I have got! Well, it can't be help'd. Why, now I ought, like an ass, to ask his pardon. Faith, I should not have wonder'd if he had swore a rape against her—*The handkerchief*— O the sly devil!—and so he was to suspect Jenny Law, as pretty a girl as any in the parish.

HERE, tearing the paper, he went to Lucius,

cius, crying, at every ſtep, I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon with all my heart. Odſo, what a racket have I been making in vindication of the honour of my ſiſter, when her honour is not worth a button!

THEY now ſhook hands, and, in a few minutes, were as good friends as if nothing had happened. Prudilla had dined in her chamber, and afterwards laid down for about an hour; and then ſent to inform us, that ſhe ſhould be glad of our company. She now look'd much better than when we enter'd the room before; notwithſtanding her having, ſince that time, ſuffer'd a very great expence of ſpirits. This might be occaſioned by her having now no more painful ſecrets to diſcloſe. Her countenance was tolerably ſerene; and, tho' ſhe could not look upon us without confuſion, it was a confuſion unmix'd with that ghaſtly horror which before gave an additional wanneſs to her diſcolour'd cheeks and lips. She was riſing as we enter'd the room; and, as ſhe took the ſame ſeat, we took ours. After enquiring how ſhe did, and particularly, whether ſhe had received any hurt from her fall from the chair, which ſhe aſſured us ſhe had not, ſhe began:

I HAVE now diſcovered my ſhame to you both; and, whatever you think of me, I de-

ſire you would not, when I am gone, expoſe me amongſt my friends. I have now little elſe to do, but to prepare for that other world, to which I am haſtening. Death is a dreadful ſtroke, but I muſt go thro' it. It is guilt, it is guilt that makes it terrible.—I am very loth to die.—It will be your duty, Sir, to take care of this child.——I am very ſenſible, that the dear infant has no right to any part of the fortune you obtained by your marriage with this lady, and therefore I give her mine.——To ſpeak my mind freely, it is with great uneaſineſs that I ſupport the thought of leaving her to ſuch an athieſt as you. My religious principles are very different from yours; or, rather, I queſtion whether you have any religion at all. However, you are a moral man; and if mere morality would ſave you, you bid fairer than moſt others for happineſs. The morality of the beſt is imperfect; and, therefore, not fit to juſtify us in the ſight of God.—But, alas! why do I talk of morality! I, that build all my hopes on your doing juſtice to my child, in giving her, if not religious, at leaſt, virtuous principles, drawn from this morality! I, who have ſo heinouſly ſinned, that I hardly durſt hope for mercy. I, that have abuſed all

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the good ſenſe that God has given me, and behaved like one that had never taſted of the ſweetneſs of his grace! Oh! I feel the corruptneſs of my own heart. I was ſurely born in ſin, and in iniquity did my mother conceive me. I am ſenſible that my own righteouſneſs is but as filthy rags.

IT was now impoſſible for me, Madam, to forbear ſmiling. I could not help giving my aſſent to theſe laſt words, and ſaying, to myſelf, that I believed ſo too. Lucius kept his countenance pretty well: he heard himſelf loaded with abundance of religious abuſe, without the leaſt diſcompoſure in his look: he ſhook his head, liſten'd ſtill with pity in his eyes, and never once attempted to interrupt her. After a good deal more to the ſame purpoſe, ſhe let us know that ſhe had had a pious education, and a very early experimental ſenſe of religion. That, as ſhe was converted betimes, as ſhe thought then, though now ſhe doubted it, ſhe had always a great abhorrence of vice; but grew proud of her religious attainments; and this, added to a temper naturally peeviſh, made her cenſorious. At laſt ſhe loved Lucius; ſhe ſtruggled againſt her weakneſs; ſhe repreſented to herſelf the difference of their age, and the little probability,

that he would marry a woman twenty years older than himſelf; however, ſhe ſtrove to allure him by her behaviour; but it was all in vain: ſhe then chang'd her conduct, her paſſion became criminal; and, after a ſtruggle between that and her conſcience, flatter'd herſelf, that, as ſhe had ſuch proof of her being one of the elect, it was impoſſible ſhe ſhould ever be a caſt-away, and, confiding in this, ſhe reſolved to give way to her paſſion: ſhe then drank in iniquity like water; and going on, from one crime to another, ſinned beyond all hopes of mercy. Poor Lucius was the cauſe of all: had ſhe never known him, ſhe might have ſtill been virtuous: but love made her commit what her conſcience condemn'd.—She could not bear her own reflections; ſhe, therefore, endeavour'd to conceal her actions from the light, from herſelf, from him, from the world.

THIS, Madam, is the ſubſtance of a very long diſcourſe, of which I was heartily weary; nor ſhould I trouble you with it, if it did not ſeem neceſſary to give you a portrait of her mind, and to let you ſee how far even religion, when rais'd upon falſe principles, had an influence in corrupting her heart. It was a gloomy ſyſtem, collected from abſtruſe paſſages

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in ſcripture, in oppoſition to the plaineſt; big with abſurdity, contradiction, and blaſphemy; contrary to every ſentiment we can form of the Deity, as a wiſe and good being, and to the plaineſt dictates of unprejudiced reaſon.

LUCIUS did not chuſe to make any anſwer to this fine harangue, which ſhe did not conclude without giving him ſome exhortations to repentance: and, indeed, ſhe had drawn it out to ſuch a length, and her ſpirits were ſo exhauſted, that ſhe was obliged, immediately after, to lie down; we therefore took our leave, promiſing to ſee her again in two or three days time. We drank tea with Mr. Stevens, who behaved in the moſt friendly manner. The will was read, and he had now no objection to being his ſiſter's executor.

WE had ſcarcely drove from the door, when I obſerved that Lucius appeared extremely thoughtful. We were now free from company, and perhaps he might dread leſt I ſhould take hold of this firſt opportunity, to make him ſome reproaches: but I was reſolved to diſappoint him. He watch'd my looks; he eyed me very attentively from time to time, and ſeem'd deſirous of divining my thoughts, while, with a modeſt diffidence in his countenance, he ſeem'd to wait till I began the diſagreable

ſubject. I believe we had been full five minutes in the coach without ſpeaking a word to each other: at laſt, I began with aſking him, what were his thoughts of Prudilla. I hardly know, ſaid he, what to think of her; ſhe has confeſſed herſelf guilty of very black crimes. Could I have conſented to conceal my father's misfortunes, I had been juſtly puniſh'd. I muſt have been ruined. What would your father have thought of me? It is very true, ſaid I, it was an infernal ſcheme; the very idea of it makes me tremble. It was happy for me, that your generous ſentiments, which would not ſuffer you to conceal it, broke all her meaſures. But the child—added I, ſmiling: why I am made a mother, at a time when I leaſt thought of it. But did your ſuſpicions fall where ſhe intended they ſhould? Yes, my dear, ſaid he, giving me a moſt affectionate look, that ſeem'd to thank me for treating him ſo gently; I return'd the handkerchief, which the young woman received, indeed, without a bluſh: this I perfectly remember. I had never taken notice of her before; and methought ſhe had, with a very agreable perſon, an innocence and modeſty in her behaviour, which I could not tell how to reconcile with the character of a laſcivious wan-

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ton. I reflected on what I had done; and reflection brought a number of ideas to my mind, that were by no means pleasing. However, I had the honest satisfaction of thinking that I was not her corrupter; and this thought blunted the sharpness of self-reproach. I look'd upon her ruin as almost irreparable; and painted to myself, in the strongest colours, the unhappy situation of a girl abandoned to the indulgence of disgraceful appetites, lost to all sense of real virtue and honour, and in the direct road to infamy and misery. I pitied her, and resolved to endeavour, at least, to reclaim her. I found her one day alone, and, seizing the opportunity, I began a lecture on incontinency—O hideous! interrupted I; a pretty gentleman to preach to a girl on that subject!—the supposed partner in her guilt too!—why, I wonder how you could have the confidence to open your mouth about it.—The most improper person!——No, my dear, returned Lucius, with a smile, I must differ from you: for supposing her the person, I can't help, even now, thinking myself the most proper man in the world. However, it was with much difficulty, that I brought myself to form the resolution, and with more still, that I put it in practice. I thought it my duty, in a pe-

culiar manner, and encouraged myſelf with the pleaſing proſpect of ſaving a very agreable girl from ruin. But, when I had this opportunity, I knew not how to begin. I was aſhamed of appearing more virtuous than her, and reproaching her for an action, which ſhe, I imagin'd, thought I ought rather to thank her for. Theſe laſt reflections held me for ſome time ſilent; but, at laſt, I boldly began, with obſerving that a girl, ſo agreable in her perſon, and, to outward appearance, ſo modeſt and prudent, ſeemed form'd by nature for happineſs: and that it was a pity, that, with ſo many perfections, ſhe ſhould deſtroy all her hopes of enjoying the pleaſures of an innocent love, all her proſpects of a happy marriage; loſe the eternal rewards of heaven, and inconſiderately plunge herſelf in ruin and infamy. She interrupted me, by telling me, ſhe was ſurpriſed to hear me talk in this manner, and wonder'd what I would be at. I then began to tell her that I was a partner in her guilt; and that, tho' I had not the reſolution to withſtand the temptation, yet my conſcience reproached me for what I had done; and I ſincerely repented of my folly: let me perſuade you, ſaid I——She ſtared;—ſhe believed

believed I was mad:—ſhe flew out of the room, and I---look'd like a fool.

I BELIEVE ſo, replied I, burſting into a laugh. Poor girl! I pity her. I only wiſh Prudilla had overheard you. But, I hope, the natural innocence of her behaviour cured this groundleſs ſuſpicion. In a great meaſure it did, returned he; notwithſtanding it was reaſonable to ſuppoſe that a girl, who took ſuch precaution as to come and go away in the dark, and who, all the time ſhe was with me, never ſpoke louder than a whiſper, would ſtrenuouſly deny a fact, which ſhe took ſuch pains to conceal: I was not, therefore, perfectly ſatisfied.——But I can't help thinking, now I know her innocent, in how ridiculous a light I muſt then appear to her. Two or three months after, I lay there again; I took the precaution to lock my door, but I had not been an hour in bed, when I met with the ſame temptation, which, in ſpite of all my previous reſolutions, again proved too ſtrong for me. Thus, perfectly convinced of my own weakneſs, I reſolved never to lie another night in the ſame houſe. But whenever I went there, I took particular notice of the young woman's complexion, as well as of her ſhape; and in ſix or eight months time,

obſerving no marks of her pregnancy, I grew perfectly eaſy with reſpect to her, and began to blame myſelf for my unjuſt ſuſpicions; though I was ſtill at a loſs where to fix them. Indeed, my dear, continued he, I can't help thinking Prudilla committed a greater crime, in thus endeavouring to ruin the reputation of a modeſt girl, by loading her with all the infamy of her own guilt, than in the very actions that gave occaſion to it. How depraved muſt have been her mind! How loſt to every generous and humane ſentiment!——But 'tis happy for her, that ſhe has had time to correct the irregularities of her paſſions. Cenſoriouſneſs, inhumanity, and the indulgence of every ſelfiſh paſſion, are the natural conſequences of her ſentiments of religion; a religion, which, reſpecting only God, regards every duty to man as low and contemptible: but ſo deeply are the kind affections imprinted on the heart; ſo lovely does virtue, humanity, and generoſity appear to all mankind; that, however the minds of individuals are warped by ſelfiſh views, they cannot help ſecretly approving this temper in others: and, even thoſe of her ſentiments, however contemptibly they ſpeak of it, generally ſhew by their actions, that they have the ſame obligations to nature, the

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ſame impulſes to goodneſs, with the reſt of mankind: ſo that, however pernicious their religious ſentiments may appear, with reſpect to their tendency, it very rarely happens that they have really ſuch unhappy, ſuch horrid effects.

BUT I will trouble you no longer, Madam, with the repetition of a converſation, which begins to grow but little intereſting. You will, I fancy, readily believe that I am now ſufficiently weary; for this is as true as that I am

YOUR LADYSHIP'S
conſtant friend,
FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXVII.

YOU find, Madam, by my two laſt letters, that I am arrived at the unexpected honour of being a ſtep-mother: but whether I ſhall behave in ſuch a manner as to ſupport my new dignity, with any degree of applauſe to myſelf, is a circumſtance that I cannot yet be ſure of. However, of this I am certain, that I was never in my life half ſo an-

gry as I am now at our writers of plays, novels, and romances, for continually drawing a ſtep-mother as a monſter in nature; and ſo terrible a creature, that one would be apt to conceive that ſhe had not one feature, that, in the leaſt, reſembled any part of a human being. And, indeed, in all my reading, which, in this way, is pretty extenſive, I can hardly recollect above one or two inſtances, in which this inexorable tyrant had the leaſt advantage above a tiger, a wolf, or a crocodile. That a bad woman ſhould make a bad wife, and a worſe ſtep-mother, is not to be wondered at; eſpecially, if covetouſneſs, pride, ill-nature, and an extraordinary fondneſs for her own children, center in the ſame breaſt! But while there are ſuch perſons in the world as your ever honoured aunt, it muſt be convinced, that an empty name can never change the diſpoſition of the heart, and turn the moſt mild, the tendereſt and moſt generous minds into ſavage cruelty. By her example, Madam, I intend to regulate my conduct; and while I ſtrive to imitate ſo fine a model, I muſt be a wretched copieſt, indeed, if I myſelf am not tolerably perfect.

LUCIUS ſeems extremely pleaſed at my manner of treating him, and a thouſand times has

has he already thanked me, by his looks, and the moſt engaging expreſſions of tenderneſs. Two days after this day of wonders, we went to pay another viſit to Prudilla. I was deſirous of ſeeing the child, and eaſily imagined, that though Lucius was perfectly ſilent on this head, he could not avoid being much more ſo, though his fear of offending me might make him conceal it. As Mr. Stevens had torn the paper, which contained a detail of his ſiſter's guilt, we had loſt the direction where to find the little creature, whom I now began to conſider as one of the family. I, therefore, the evening before, propoſed his ſending a ſervant, with a letter, to give them notice when we intended to ſee them, and to deſire that the infant might be brought to their houſe. Lucius readily embraced this propoſal, and with a look, that ſeemed to ſpeak much more than he expreſſed, ſeized hold of my hand, and thanked me for the care I took to anticipate his deſires.

THE next morning we ſet out pretty early; and, upon our arrival, Mr. Stevens, handing me out of the coach, conducted us in, when he muſt needs ſalute me, under the character of his ſiſter, not in law, ſaid he, but againſt law; however, you are my ſiſter, and you

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ſhall be my ſiſter. I hope, added he, you have heartily forgiven the penitent above ſtairs; if you have, you muſt let us ſee it, by taking care of her child: and, by this means, you will greatly oblige, not only me, your brother, and the bantling's uncle and guardian, but, our good friend, my young philoſopher there the baby's pappa, whom, let me tell you, it is your duty to oblige.

O, SIR, ſaid I, I will not diſpute with you about a name. If you can prove that you are any way related to me, I ſhall certainly eſteem it an honour. As to the child, I can make no promiſes, I aſſure you: I can only ſay, that I will do my endeavour, at leaſt; and, though not from dull duty, I ſhall, from affection, a much more engaging motive, ſtrive to contribute to the ſatisfaction of one, who is nearer than a brother.

YOU are very good, Madam, replied he, ſmiling; but, as to the honour of being related to me, (in this manner I mean) I muſt confeſs that it is but very little. The poor brat, it muſt be acknowledged, is baſe-born; and, therefore, you are no more its mother-in-law, than I am your brother-in-law: I mean by the law of the land. By the laws of nature and reaſon, indeed, you are much

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more nearly related; for, as this gentleman's wife, you are as much the mother of this child, as if it had been born in marriage: for his marriage, with my ſiſter, would not make the child more his than it is at preſent, and, conſequently, your duty is, in both caſes, the ſame.

I AM quite of your mind, Sir, ſaid I: but where is this little creature? methinks, I long to be acquainted with my new charge. We ſhall have the young ſlut here by and by, replied he; and than added gravely, But what is the matter with Lucius? See how thoughtful he looks—why, I profeſs, he has all the father in his face.———It is written on his forehead. He has one child now, which, three days ago, I dare ſay he never ſo much as dreamed of, and, if I gueſs right, in three months or ſo he will have another. Is it not true, Madam? No wonder then that he has the look of a patriarch.——But, I hope, he has not loſt his ſpeech!

No, no, Sir, ſaid Lucius, with a ſmile; I have been liſtening very attentively to you, and, at the ſame time, admiring the goodneſs of a lady that derives freſh charms from my guilt and folly. Nay, nay, cried he, there is no wonder that you ſhould not find an opportu-

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nity to put in a ſingle word, when a talkative old fellow, and a very fine lady, ſeem reſolved to have all the diſcourſe to themſelves: when this is the caſe, you are too wiſe not to know, that the moſt complaiſant thing the huſband can do, is not to interrupt them.---But is ſhe ſo very good? why then, I ſuppoſe, you have not had ſo much as a curtain lecture on this affair? Far from it, I aſſure you, replied Lucius. Then ſhe is a dear, ſweet, little angel, cried the old man; ay, and a goddeſs too; and---an---an---I don't know what to call her; I can't think of a name half good enough. I could almoſt find in my heart, to raviſh a kiſs from her for it: only I am afraid that it will be a little unreaſonable that both ſhould ſuffer a rape from our family. Let me tell you, Madam, that you are happy, in having an opportunity to ſhew a greatneſs of mind, that muſt for ever endear you to a man of ſenſe. But whatever you are in reality, you are not to appear to the world in the character of a ſtep-mother; the infant muſt be brought up as the child of a deceaſed friend, relation or ſo; or, if Lucius will conſent to it, let her be put under the care of his mother and Marilla. This, Madam, will eaſe you of a conſiderable part of the care of your office,

ſice, and, at the ſame time, you will have an opportunity of ſeeing her as often as you pleaſe.

LUCIUS readily approved of this motion, and I as readily agreeing to it, it was reſolved, that Sophronia, Lucius's mother, ſhould be informed, by Mr. Stevens, of the whole affair. This being immediately determined, he reſumed, There are many advantages which will attend your concealing the truth from the world; beſides the ſingle conſideration of the reputation of the two families. You would in ſome ſenſe, be regarded by the world, as a ſtep-mother: and though they would, doubtleſs, be ready to make ſome allowance in conſideration of the ſlut's being baſe-born; yet the very name itſelf is generally here, in the country, the cauſe of diſcontent, and frequent uneaſineſs. It is an unthankful office. Every body takes pains to render her ſuſpected by the little brats; they, without thought, are induſtrious to weaken her authority, by ſowing, in their unthinking minds, the ſeeds of jealouſy, diſtruſt, and a ſpirit of contradiction. And let her be ever ſo good, let her have ever ſuch an affection for the children, the ſlighteſt correction, the moſt gentle reproof, is aggravated into the moſt inſupport-

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able tyranny; every old woman in the parish bemoans their hard fate, and let the urchins be guilty of ever so great a crime, they can't whimper, but the simple, well-meaning neighbours cry out, Ah, poor souls, if their own mother was alive, they would not be served so. The children easily imbibe these bad influences, and are inadvertently taught to hate a person, who, perhaps, strives to love them; a woman, who, from the time of her marriage, filled with a just sense of her duty, may have resolved to do them all the justice in her power, and to treat them with all possible lenity. Her case is very hard: all her endeavours to please are fruitless: a bad construction is put upon her kindest actions: she strives in vain; is unthanked; and, perhaps, repaid with ingratitude. And this, Madam, I have, sometimes, known to be the case of by far the best woman in the neighbourhood.

REALLY, Sir, said I, you give a very shocking account of the uncomfortable state of being a mother in-law; enough to frighten any woman from the thoughts of marrying a man who has children: but, however, if she has the goodness to persevere in her kindness, she must surely win them over at last, their

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prejudices muſt vaniſh; and, if Mr. Prior's remark be true, that

Malice vanquiſh'd heightens virtue's praiſe,

ſhe will then have the ſatisfaction of a glorious revenge: having made this noble conqueſt, ſhe will force them to do juſtice to her merit, and, in ſpite of themſelves, to give her their love, their eſteem, and their gratitude. What are all the ſubmiſſions in the world to this? to ſee their cheeks glow with affection, at the ſame time that they, with an honeſt bluſh, own their error: this is not only heaping coals of fire on their heads, but on their hearts too.

THIS is very true, ſaid Lucius, ſmiling, and giving me a look of approbation; but few tempers can hold out againſt ill treatment: ingratitude may ſometimes ſour the beſt minds; it too eaſily prompts them to make a return in kind: and when this is the caſe, both the lady and the children are worthy of pity.

WE now went up ſtairs, where we found Prudilla in a much weaker condition than when we were here before: but we had hardly taken our ſeats, when we heard Mr. Stevens talking to a woman at the chamber door, and having deſired her to ſtep down into the pantry to refreſh herſelf, came in with a child in his

his arms. Lucius and I arose: our eyes were fixed on the infant, which, ſmiling held out its little arms to me: but Mr. Stevens not obſerving this, carried it to Prudilla, who, giving a deep ſigh, and looking upon it with eyes ſwimming with affection, deſired to kiſs it: but the child turned away, and, perhaps, frighted at her ghaſtly appearance, ſtill ſtruggled to come at me; which ſhe immediately did, the moment ſhe was ſet down at her mamma's knee.

THIS little incident, trifling as it was, gave me a good deal of pleaſure. I ſat down, and placing her on my lap, gave her a kiſs: ſhe fondled me, and, with an innocent ſmile, ſtroked my face, for half a minute, ſaying, Ah, poor! then gigled, and hid her pretty hand in my boſom. I could not help being fond of the dear creature. I kiſſed her ſeveral times, without even knowing why I did it; it was giving way to an impulſe, which I could not reſiſt. I conſidered her as a part of my dear Lucius: I endeavoured to trace in her face ſome of his well known features. I caſt my eyes on him that I might be able to form a more accurate judgment of the reſemblance; when I could not help obſerving, that, with a look of peculiar pleaſure, he ſeemed to watch all my ac-

actions, while, at the ſame time, his countenance was overſpread with a ſoftneſs, that methought expreſſed a paternal affection working in his heart. While I was thus engaged in endavouring to trace out, and, by the help of fancy, to prove a likeneſs between the lineaments of a face that was placed before me, and thoſe in miniature placed near my boſom, my glances frequently met his; and the ſatisfaction, and delight, that appeared in them, gave an additional applauſe to that which aroſe from the indulgence of theſe fooleries. Lucius, notwithſtanding this viſible ſatisfaction, ſtill continued ſilent, and ſeemed at a loſs how to behave; though ſo many expreſſions of my tenderneſs might well be ſuppoſed to authoriſe him: and I was juſt going to chide him for it, when Prudilla, with a ſigh, cry'd in a very peeviſh and jealous tone, that ſhe thought it very hard that ſhe might not have the pleaſure of kiſſing her own child; that ſhe ſaw plainly I ſhould ſpoil it; and that it was an odd way of ſhewing my kindneſs, to take her from a perſon that muſt be ſuppoſed to love her better than I, or any body elſe could do. Lucius coloured, and, giving her a look of indignation, was going to ſpeak, when Mr. Stevens began; for he being let into the important

ſecret,

ſecret, was now ſuffered to continue in the room. What do you mean, ſiſter, ſaid he, in a haſty ſevere manner; would you not have the lady love the child? If you are ſo jealous that no body muſt be fond of her but yourſelf, e'en take her with you. A good mother would think herſelf very happy, in leaving it to the care of a perſon, who is diſpoſed to be fond of it. A good mother! returned ſhe, crying: you are always reproaching me with my guilt: why muſt I be told of it? —— Why muſt I be upbraided with being a mother? But yet it is too true—to my ſhame it is—would to God I had never been a mother!—— would to God I had never deſerved to be a mother! See there now, cried Mr. Stevens, I profeſs there is no ſuch thing as ſpeaking to her: I reproach you!—Well, but it's no matter, and then addreſſing himſelf to me, Dear Madam, ſaid he, excuſe this treatment: my ſiſter's illneſs makes her ſo peeviſh, that ſhe hardly knows what ſhe ſays: be ſo good as to let me take the child.

LUCIUS and I ſtared; and it was not without ſome ſtruggles, that I ſtifled my reſentment. I was two or three times going to break out, and to interrupt them; and had I followed the firſt dictates of my paſſion, ſo much

much was I provoked at her manner of ſpeaking, that I ſhould have diſowned all my tenderneſs to the child, though my heart would have given the lye to my words; and have vented much more bitter reproaches, than thoſe ſhe received from her brother. And, perhaps, in the heat of my reſentment, I might have told her, that, to oblige her, I would readily diſclaim all relation to it. But a few moments reflection, and the ſight of Lucius, made me reſolve to ſpeak in a different manner; and Mr. Stevens's good-natur'd apology, not to ſpeak at all. Could I, Madam, have ſaid any thing that would have diſpleaſed Lucius more? Could I have behaved in a manner more contrary to the ſettled diſpoſition of my mind? Yet paſſion would have done what my reaſon would for ever have diſallowed. Mr. Stevens took the child, who clung to me, and, giving me a beſeeching look, cry'd at parting: He ſtepp'd with her to his ſiſter, and ſetting her on one of the arms of the chair, ſhe had juſt ſtrength enough to keep her from falling. She kiſſed her two or three times; but had hardly had her a minute, when ſaying, that her crying diſtracted her head, ſhe deſired that ſomebody would take the naughty girl from her. Lucius ſeized her

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in his arms; and firſt ſeeming to obſerve my looks, hugged her to his boſom, kiſſed her with the affection of a tender parent, and then brought her to me, and deſired her to kiſs me, which ſhe readily did. He ſmiled, and being apprehenſive that Prudilla's ill temper might again ſhew itſelf, wiſh'd her better, and we both took our leave, Mr. Stevens calling for the nurſe to take the child. While we were at dinner, Mr. Stevens renewed his apologies, and at the ſame time, told me, that he had been ſo provoked at ſeeing my goodneſs, as he called it, ſo ungratefully return'd, that, notwithſtanding his ſiſter's illneſs, he had much ado to behave towards her with any degree of decency. And, on this ſcore too, Lucius vindicated his ſilence, alledging, that if he had once begun to reproach her, his heat of temper would, in all probability, have made him treat her, in ſuch a manner, as might have been attended with very ill conſequences, with reſpect to her. I was not, I confeſs, entirely ſatisfied with this reaſon; I was inſulted on his account, and had been ſhocked with reproaches, in the midſt of a glow tenderneſs, and while I was giving a high teſtimony of my affection to him, and engaged in an employment, which my affronted pride made me almoſt look upon as an act of

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ſupererogation. However, I ſeemed to admit of his excuſe, and as I made no reply, but took pains to curb and conceal the remains of my ill temper, which had now pretty well ſubſided, he ſeemed to think me perfectly ſatisfied with it.

You ſee, Madam, that I can be out of humour without cauſe. Lucius was certainly in the right: for how barbarous would it have been in him to have retaliated an affront, on a woman on the very verge of life, merely for a weekneſs and peeviſh fretfulneſs, which her illneſs, added to her uneaſy reflections, might well excuſe! And had the conſequences been what he had juſt reaſon to dread, I am ſure he would never have forgiven himſelf.

Our converſation, Madam, for the reſt of the day, was ſo little intereſting, that I ſhall not trouble either you or myſelf with a repetition of it. And, indeed, I have already given you trifles enough to make you think this a moſt trifling letter. My mind was, however, in a moſt delightful ſituation, all the afternoon, and, particularly, when we took our leave; and the engaging manner in which Lucius made his acknowledgments upon our return home in the coach, ſtrengthened and confirmed every delightful ſenſation. My dear

Felicia, ſaid he, taking hold of my hand, and giving me a look expreſſive of every thing that can be called tender and generous; how kind, how obliging is your whole behaviour! how agreeable is my ſurprize to find nothing but the deareſt proofs of affection, where I expected to meet with reproach; and to ſee you generouſly overlook a crime, which would raiſe the indignation of almoſt every other woman! To ſee you careſs a child, which is not your own! A child that is———But I can't find words to expreſs half my meaning. Is all my tenderneſs too little for you, that you muſt thus endeavour to encreaſe it, with the moſt ſenſible obligations, and to add to love the higheſt admiration and gratitude? How much are you miſtaken, cry'd I, laughing! what will you ſay if I tell you that I know many ladies, and, I believe, ſome of ſtrict virtue too, who have adopted it as a maxim, that "a reformed rake makes the "beſt huſband." This is really a moſt ridiculous, as well as indecent aſſertion, and, whenever it is tried, a moſt dangerous experiment: but as vanity makes them always flatter themſelves, that their charms are capable of producing this wonderful reformation, they are hardly ever afraid of marrying, even

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the moſt abandoned libertine, though ſunk a thouſand degrees below the dignity of a man. Pray what would theſe people ſay to a fault, which muſt appear extremely ſmall, when compared to years ſpent in the diabolical employment of ruining innocence, and in all the cruel infernal arts of falſhood, deceit, and treachery? I am ſurprized, my dear, ſaid Lucius, that ladies, who have adopted ſuch a pernicious opinion, ſhould have ſo little prudence as to make it publick. Have they no ſenſe of modeſty? Can they be inſenſible, that people will be apt to charge them with being influenced by deſires, that prompt them only to approve a man, who has given beforehand convincing teſtimonies of his ability to gratify them; and that, for a certainty of this they will ſacrifice every other conſideration, and prefer him who has proved himſelf a villain? You know, my dear, it is not ſuch as theſe I meant. I would not do you the injury to mention your name with theirs, nor am I ſolicitous about the diſlike, or approbation of ſuch as theſe: but that you ſhould thus generouſly hide my faults: how can I ſufficiently thank you! That you, who are modeſty itſelf, a friend to every virtue, ſhould, inſtead of upbraidings, laviſh your tenderneſs,

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and with all the blaniſhment of love careſs an infant, that—Hold, hold, my dear, cried I, laughing, a truce to your flattery, I beſeech you. Pray how long have we been married? —Above nine months I believe: it's high time ſure to have done with compliments: why we ought to have had twice as many quarrels; and, to follow the mode, we ſhould before this time have begun heartily to hate each other:—but to be ſerious, added I, with a gravity much more ſuitable to the preſent diſpoſition of my mind than this flight, which, however lively, was all affectation; to what purpoſe ſhould I torture you, by reproaching you with a fault long ſince paſſed? Can I give you pain without feeling it myſelf? Since none of us are perfect, ought I not rather to rejoice that you have ſo few faults, and ſo many virtues to counterbalance them? I am very ſenſible that ſhould a young woman, with the ſame temptation, ſo readily forfeit her honour, ſhe would be entirely inexcuſable, and her crime would admit of but little alleviation. I am ſenſible too, that though ſhe would ſuffer the greateſt infamy, by becoming a mother, your crime, in the eye of heaven, may be as great as hers; yet the world that would condemn her, will excuſe you: and ſhall I

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be more obdurate, and leſs ready to forgive than a ſtranger? I who have improved by your example, and who owe to you a vaſt acquiſition in knowledge, and in many ſublimely delicate ſenſations. It was you, who firſt taught me to converſe with myſelf, to know the pleaſures of reflection, and all the delight that accompanies heavenly gratitude and love. With all theſe obligations, have I reaſon to complain, that you are a man and not an angel? Though you have been frail, your mind is ſtill untainted. I have not the leaſt fear of your infidelity to me. It is my duty—it is my intereſt, to make you happy, and, I hope, it will always be, as it is now, my higheſt pleaſure. O Lucius! where could I have found a huſband like you? for, as Hamlet ſays of his father, "Take you for all in all, I ne'er "ſhall look upon your like again."

LUCIUS embraced me; but told me he might, with far greater juſtice, retort the charge of flattery upon me. He confeſſed, that he had many imperfections, and the moſt tender and obliging things were ſaid on both ſides; but I have now neither the leiſure nor inclination to repeat them. May every refined delight be yours, and

may your ladyſhip ever be as happy as is, at preſent

Your ſincereſt friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXVIII.

I Am very glad, Madam, to find that both you and your aunt approve my conduct: but if you make my letters ſo public, as to ſhew them your friends, you will oblige me, in ſpite of my own inclinations, to write with more reſerve. The account of the diſpute between her and you, on the propriety of Lucius's reproving a young woman, whom he thought a partner in his guilt, is very diverting: but I am more pleaſed to find that confidence and unreſerve, with which I have related certain events, and which I was not altogether ſatisfied with, ſufficiently juſtified, by her obſervations. It is with inexpreſſible delight I hear her ſay; "that the ingenuity of "mind, which could prompt him to under-"take ſo irkſome a taſk, and the modeſt diffi-"dence that accompanied his behaviour to "me, ſo oppoſite to the bold confidence of a "man,

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" place him in ſo fair a view, as to make
" him, in her opinion, more amiable than
" if he had wanted this ſhade to heighten the
" lights, which form the portrait I have giv-
" en of his character."

AFTER this compliment to Lucius, would not any one imagine that I was a tolerable painter? She talks of lights and ſhades mutually ſetting off each other; and what elſe is neceſſary to compleat the picture? How unreaſonable is it in her, to inſiſt upon your deſiring me, to preſent her with a more finiſhed piece, and to give the portrait of his mind in one view! But you muſt be obeyed. And yet how difficult is the taſk! Where ſhall I begin? He has all thoſe endearing impreſſions of humanity, thoſe native traces of goodneſs, which the mind approves upon the firſt view. His virtue coſts him little or no pains, it ſprings freely from his ſoul; while the eaſy ſweetneſs, with which it is accompanied, lets every one ſee that it is attended with all the pleaſures of ſelf-gratification: It is the reſult of a refined taſte, a correct imagination, and a ſettled judgment. From hence his beneficence derives its virtue, as well as its ſource, and not from a conſideration of the

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pleaſure that accompanies it. In ſhort, he has a mind ſo noble, ſo diſintereſtedly and freely virtuous, that a perſon, who would repreſent virtue at a continual war with ourſelves, would ſcarely allow him to have any virtue at all. Nay, if there be any foundation for the opinion of thoſe gentlemen, who place the perfection of a virtuous action, in the oppoſition it meets with from nature, he is abſolutely incapable of performing one, either generous in itſelf, or acceptable to his God. If this commonly received opinion be true, it will prove that no one, who has not firſt been a compleat villain, can poſſibly attain to the ſublime character of a good man. That he who fluctuates between the rage of appetite on the one hand, and his duty on the other, is the faireſt character upon earth; and that a man of regular deſires, a man of ſtrict honour, acting from the moſt generous motives, is the moſt unhappy creature living; ſince his virtues, becoming by practice in a manner conſtitutional, muſt loſe all their value, and, conſequently, their reward. But let it be conſidered, that the *ſtrength* of every vicious propenſity, is only the *weakneſs* of the oppoſite virtue; that a reluctance to an act of humanity, can only proceed from the hardneſs of a heart, petrified

trified by a criminal ſelfiſhneſs; and that the very ſuſpenſe between virtue and vice tarniſhes the virtue, though it ſhould become victorious. Can that be an imperfection in man, which is the glory of all the higher orders of created beings, and even of the great creator himſelf? For, as a moſt ingenious author ſays, "If compulſion be of the eſſence of "virtue, the conduct of even the ſupreme be-"ing has much leſs merit in it, than the "moſt diſingenuous of his creatures;---for to "practiſe virtue, the *higheſt* degrees of virtue, "without *conſtraint*, to purſue it upon a prin-"ciple of free choice, for the mere pleaſure "and approbation of the thing itſelf, as his "glory, and his happineſs, is what conſtitutes "our idea of the divine perfection: and ſhall "the ſame thing, which gives ſuch a ſuperla-"tive grace and luſtre to the divine character, "caſt a ſhade upon the human? So that, after "all, conſtraint and ſelf-denial are ſo far from "being *neceſſary* to virtue, that it is mere "*weakneſs*, and want of virtue, that gives them "either uſe or expediency*."

THUS, Madam, I have been at the pains of embelliſhing my letter, and ſetting off my

* See Philemon to Hydaſpes, the ſecond converſation upon falſe religion, page 102, 103.

own reflections, with a long quotation, to contradict a favourite opinion of your aunt's; and to prove, that my dear Lucius may be a good man, without having a violent inclination to be a bad one. There are inſtances, it is true, in which virtue is attended with ſome degree of ſelf-denial; and this would, doubtleſs, have been the caſe of Lucius, had he had virtue to refuſe the profered favours of the unknown Prudilla: but, however difficult the conqueſt is at firſt, a ſteady adherence removes every obſtacle; the temptation, ariſing from future attacks, becomes leſs and leſs, as the mind becomes more perfect; perſeverance treads down the briars, and makes the path plain, eaſy, and delightful; unnumber'd beauties open to our view, and the rugged road becomes the lawn of pleaſure; the mind is at leiſure, calmly, to contemplate the divine landſcape that lies before it, to enjoy the fragrant breeze, to taſte the charms of conſcious innocence, budding with golden fruit; and, above all, with rapture to behold the ſmiles of heaven, beaming celeſtial light, and divine complacency.—

But whither am I rambling? It is time to trace back my ſteps, and, like a good wife, to return to my huſband; and, as I flatter myſelf, that I have done him juſtice, I will proceed

ceed with his character, which will be beſt illuſtrated by his conduct. His uſual employment is, in giving joy to a number of grateful dependents; and ſometimes Marilla and I have the ſatisfaction of joining with him, in little acts of beneficence and compaſſion. When there are immediate objects of diſtreſs before him, how readily does his ſenſible heart catch their ſorrows! how ſpeedily does he anticipate their wiſhes, and turn their grief into admiration and joy! while his affability and condeſcention give an irreſiſtible grace to his benefits. But not contented with doing good, when forcibly touched by objects of pity, he endeavours to prevent the leaſt approach of unhappineſs and miſery, and provides againſt the poor's aſking for relief, by placing them above the want of it.

WITH regard to this his principal view, he has laid a plan for making conſiderable alterations in the garden. To ſerve the poor, he has already * levelled giants with the ground, demoliſhed inchanted caſtles, and will ſhortly, by an arrangement of more natural beauties, utterly baniſh the *phantaſtical*; which, like the Chineſe paintings, can only pleaſe, by ſhewing a kind of reſemblance of nature,

* See Letter XXVII. p. 39.

in the moſt whimſical and natural proportions. The choiceſt flowers, inſtead of being depoſited in knots, are to be careleſsly ſtrewed amongſt the ſhort graſs; and, being mingled with every ſpecies that adorns the fields, will, in the moſt beautiful manner, brocade the velvet carpet: while the tulip, auricula, and carnation, and all thoſe, whoſe riſing ſtalks would render them liable to be broken by the undiſtinguiſhing foot, or the roller, are to retire to the margin of our walks, and ſkulking cloſe, to ſeek protection from the nicely cut verdant walls, and obeliſks, that are ſtill to retain their form. We are to have, in one part, groves and viſto's of ever-greens, while in another, the vine, the honeyſuckle, and the ivy are to entwine the barren trunks, and mingle with the branches, of a row of elms, that extend acroſs the extremity of the garden, but which, at every walk, leave an opening to let in a view of the neighbouring country. Thus, in thoſe ſeaſons, when the rain, or the froſt, withholds ſubſiſtence from the families of our poor tenants, we ſhall always find them employment, till they can return again to their uſual labours. By this means our moſt agreable accommodations will become of extenſive benefit, and our very amuſements,

muſements, accompanied with thoſe pleaſing ſenſations, which reſult from a calm, undiſturbed, benevolence.

THE man, who has perſonal merit, may ſafely depend on being treated by Lucius with the utmoſt reſpect, though his circumſtances are ever ſo low: for his poverty, ſo far from being a reproach, ſeems, in his opinion, to entitle him to a ſuperior kind of deference. He relieves him with an air, that ſhews he is only paying a debt due to humanity; and ſo cautious is he of giving a ſhock to his ſenſibility, that he has the look rather of a perſon obliged, than of one conferring an obligation. For the relief of diſtreſſed merit, he denies himſelf many of the elegancies of life, and, particularly, thoſe of the table, from which every coſtly luxurious ſuperfluity is baniſhed. The meanneſs of a man's natural abilities never inſpires him with contempt. If his heart be good, it is all that he requires; though he cannot give him the eſteem due to a friend, he is, in his opinion, a much more amiable character than the man that wants humanity, though poſſeſſed of every other qualification that can entitle him to reſpect: and, indeed, without this, fine ſenſe, the moſt brilliant wit, the moſt profound erudition,

dition, added to the glare of wealth and high birth, can extort no more from him, than a ſtiff formal civility. He is, in one word, an enemy to nothing, but vice and affectation; but he can ridicule the latter, and yet give the perſon a ſhare of his eſteem. His converſation, indeed, wants that briſk gaity, and ſprightlineſs of fancy, and all the light and airy ſallies of imagination, which we comprehend under the term *wit*; and as to repartee, he ſeldom indulges it. He has but little taſte for theſe ſparkling advantages in others, he regards them in too mean a light; and, therefore, is not ſufficiently ſenſible how much theſe natural accompliſhments give a brilliancy to converſation. When he talks, his ſtrong ſenſe is enlivened by a happy turn, a natural elegance of expreſſion, and his language, like his ſentiments, is not only juſt but ſubline. Yet gravity is not always agreable, and there are moments when folly becomes pleaſing, and we find a delight in being ridiculous: from hence wit derives its moſt pleaſing charms: for with too much wiſdom we are ſometimes apt to moap into dulneſs. But this is a caſe that rarely happens with him, though ſometimes it does with me. His ſpirits flow with a ſmooth and even ſtream, whilſt I, having

ſome-

ſometimes airy flights, am ſubject to ſink into a dulneſs, which folly and impertinence are beſt adapted to relieve.

YOU need not be told, Madam, that this is partly my caſe at preſent; the heavineſs of my expreſſions, towards the concluſion of what I have written, ſufficiently indicates that of my mind. I have loſt myſelf in drawing a character, every way ſo dear to me, in deſcribing a man, whoſe ſoul is the ſoul of friendſhip; no wonder then that my ſpirits flag! But, after all, your ladyſhip will, perhaps, think, that my affection carries me too far; and that while I am painting the *husband*, I am only diſcovering the fondneſs of the *wife*. I will, therefore, in pity to you, as well as myſelf, finiſh this pleaſing, though difficult ſubject; and, to ſecure myſelf from the double charge of dulneſs and partiality, leave, at leaſt, half his virtues untold. With my ſincereſt compliments to your other ſelf, and your very good aunt, I am

YOUR LADYSHIP'S
moſt obedient
FELICIA MANLY.

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LETTER XXXIX.

DEAR MADAM,

I Can now inform you, that Mr. Stevens has been at Mr. Manly's, where he had an opportunity of an hour or two's converſation with Sophronia and Marilla; when, to their no ſmall ſurpriſe, under the ſeal of ſecrecy, he unfolded the whole affair, relating to the child; and they readily agreed to take the pretty infant into their care. After this he went to my aunt's, where he found her ſon, who arrived the day before from his travels, and who was juſt returned from paying a viſit to Mellifont, and his ſiſter Amelia. As he was juſt ſetting out to ſee us, Mr. Stevens altered his intention of ſtaying there to dinner, and readily agreed to accompany him. Accordingly, they arrived, attended by a very ſmart young gentleman, who had commenced an acquaintance with my couſin, while they were abroad, from the ſingle conſideration of their being countrymen: they, therefore, returned together, and, as his friends lived in Yorkſhire, he made my aunt's in his way home, and, at my couſin's requeſt, conſented to ſtay with him

him two or three days, to reſt and refreſh himſelf on his journey.

LUCIUS received them all, with great reſpect, though Mr. Stevens was, I believe, the moſt welcome viſitor. The gentleman, who was an abſolute ſtranger to every body preſent, except my couſin, made an agreable appearance; he had an eaſy flow of words, and an animated expreſſion; but his converſation was that of a profeſſed libertine. He ſwore very fluently, and endeavoured to divert us with a recapitulation of ſeveral of his adventures in France and Italy. My couſin had ſo much leſs of the gentleman in his behavior, as he had more affectation; and, indeed, he had acquired nothing by his travels that I could diſcover, but a low kind of knowledge, that he had better have been without, a greater ſtock of vanity and folly, and a knack of impertinently introducing a little French: and that his converſation might want nothing to render it diſagreable, he ſwore twice as much as his companion. For he had ſcarcely ſat down, when taking a glaſs of wine, he cried, with a ridiculous affected grin, 'Sblood, Madam, you ſee that I have loſt *rien* by my travels, and ſo, damme, *à votre ſervice*.—Ha, ha, ha!—Why lookee,

lookee, that is as much as to ſay, My ſervice to ye.

WE had but once before the honour of entertaining ſuch company; however, as this was the firſt time of our ſeeing my couſin after a long abſence, and, as the other was both his friend, and an abſolute ſtranger to us, good manners, or rather the cuſtom of the world, would not ſuffer us to hazard the giving them an affront, by a reproof, which, however juſt in itſelf, would have been taken as a groſs inſult. Dinner was but juſt over, when we were agreably ſurprized with a viſit from a very worthy gentleman, the miniſter of the pariſh. But it was ſome time before we received any relief from his company: and, indeed, though reproof was more ſuitable to his character than ours, I ſoon found that he alſo had too much of the ſame good breeding to interrupt them. The ſtranger ran on with his intrigues, referring every minute to my couſin, to whom he always gave the name of his pocket book, to know either the preciſe time of an event, or the name of the place where the important trifle was tranſacted; when the latter, to ſhew his exact punctuality, and to indulge, perhaps, a kind of vanity in diſplaying the ſtrength of a memory, wholly taken

taken up with trifles, was ſure to launch out into twenty particulars, foreign to the queſtion. He never forgot the name of the meaneſt village, and, if he was aſked, what any town was called, where they had dined, he not only readily replied, but added, of his own accord, the ſign at the gate of the inn, what they had for dinner, whether the wine was good or bad, and ſome little adventure of his own, and this by way of epiſodes; for when he had done, he always put the other in mind to go on again: *But, Damme Jack! —as you was a ſaying—allons—allons*, conſtantly concluded whatever my wife couſin had to ſay. Thus they played into each other's hands, while we had nothing elſe to do, but, like humble auditors, to liſten to their impertinence.

THE tea-table did not procure us any intermiſſion; and finding the clergyman had no intention to interpoſe, I ſtepped aſide into the next room, deſiring him to follow me; where I told him, that he would oblige me, if he would take upon himſelf the trouble of giving them a genteel reproof: for I could not bear to hear them ſwear, with ſuch uncontrouled freedom. He promiſed that he would, and we returned to our chairs. We had hard-

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ly ſat down, when my couſin gave him a very favourable opportunity; for, accidentally ſpilling a little tea upon his legs, he began to curſe, and ſtamp, and ſwear, like a madman; but no damage being done, he was preſently eaſy, when the clergyman obſerved, in a very handſome manner, that he could not help being ſo unpolite, as to think ſwearing a very poor accompliſhment in a gentleman; that it was a vice that wanted even the colour of temptation to excuſe it, having neither the allurements of pleaſure nor profit. The predominance of this profane practice, added he, frequently calls for the moſt earneſt exhortations from the pulpit; and, I lately preached a ſermon upon the ſubject, which I wiſh you had had the benefit of hearing.

THIS reproof gave me a ſecret ſatisfaction, and I was going to ſecond what he had ſaid, when the ſtranger replied: And pray, doctor, be ſo good as to tell us, what ſucceſs this performance of yours had? I hope, in the Lord, you made a pretty many converts; for, to be ſure, nobody could withſtand the force of your reaſoning. The reverend gentleman, I muſt confeſs, looked a little ſilly and diſconcerted. My couſin laughed, and jogging Lucius with his elbow, and, at the ſame time, wink-

winking with one eye, cryed, juſt loud enough to be heard by all the company, *Du Diable!* did you mind him, hay—zoons, twig the parſon. Well, well, cry'd Lucius, ſmiling, I heard the ſermon the gentleman mentions; and, I aſſure you, it was a very good one. I take this opportunity, Sir, to thank you for it; but you muſt excuſe me, if I am of a different opinion from you, in this particular. Swearing is certainly attended with both pleaſure and profit; and was I to preach a ſermon, it ſhould be to prove it.

THE ſtranger appeared quite at a loſs, and rubbing his forehead, I heard him mutter to himſelf, I will be damn'd if I can tell what to make of this! Pleaſure and profit! Old Sir Crape is in the right: but what the devil does the gentleman mean? After all, it is a curſed fooliſh cuſtom. My couſin, clapping Lucius on the back, ſeemed mightily delighted, without knowing why. Mr. Stevens was in a deep ſuſpenſe, and looked at Lucius with extreme attention: while I was perfectly aſtoniſhed. I had been expecting ſome grave and judicious remark, and did not doubt but that Lucius would advance ſomething new on the ſubject, that might, for the preſent, at leaſt, put a ſtop to their profane impertinence; when I was all

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at once mortified to find that I had ſpoke to the reverend gentleman to little purpoſe, ſince he was reſolved to take their part, and to countenance what I knew his heart muſt condemn. Fie, fie, Sir, cried the clergyman, after a little heſitation, and, with a tone and look that ſhewed him equally pleaſed and diſſatisfied, You joke—I am ſure you do. Make a ſermon in praiſe of ſwearing! God forbid—'tis all a joke. Indeed, ſaid Lucius, I am in earneſt. Don't you think I ſhould make ſome converts! It is a taking ſubject—quite new, I believe, Sir. Phu, phu, converts! perverts! cry'd the good gentleman, with ſome warmth; ay, converts for Satan, indeed. Dear Sir, for heaven's ſake, don't talk in this manner. My couſin was now all life, he ſeiz'd Lucius's hand, crying, Ay, do, give us, do, *un ſermon ſur des ſermens*. Ha, ha, ha, you ſee I am a wit. I will be curſed if I don't liſten to you; faith! I will remember every word. Come, begin, commence. No, no, cry'd Lucius, why in ſuch haſte? I am not uſed to preaching, and, therefore, as this will be my firſt performance, a day or two's time is little enough to prepare myſelf. If you will all give me the favour of your company, the day after to-morrow I will

will oblige you. Mean while, I muſt deſire you, and this gentleman, your friend, to conſider the matter ſeriouſly, and prepare yourſelves to anticipate what I ſhall have to ſay; by this means, you will juſtify this practice to your own minds, and, whenever you are attacked, in this manner, again, be ready, with my aſſiſtance, to vindicate yourſelves to the world, as well as your own conſciences. I would have every body act from principle; and, therefore, I muſt beg you to endeavour to ſuſpend the practice, only, till you can recollect ſome good arguments for its vindication: this cannot, ſurely, be very long —a quarter of an hour, perhaps, may furniſh you with ſufficient motives: but if not, I would not have you be diſcouraged; there can be no great hurt in waiting till you hear my lecture, which, I dare promiſe you, will furniſh the ſtrongeſt and moſt convincing reaſons for your continuing the laudable practice. But you muſt permit me, gentlemen, added he with a ſmile, as your advocate and friend, to inſiſt upon one condition, and that is, that I may be allowed to ſwear the firſt oath, and give the firſt curſe. The ſtranger immediately gave his conſent to this propoſition, which he acknowledged to be reaſonable enough; while

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my couſin, with a look of pleaſure, precipitately reply'd, (at the ſame time giving a ſtamp with his foot, and rubbing his hands) Damn it; and ſo you ſhall, *de tout mon cœur*, by—Hold, hold, cry'd Lucius, I appeal to the company, if this be uſing me well.

THOUGH we were at a loſs to know what he was driving at, we all gave our aſſent, and I propoſed that he ſhould ſuffer ſome penalty. The poor youth was ſelf-condemned, and, ſcratching his head, begged pardon, telling us, it was not done with deſign: but Lucius was inexorable, he pulled out his watch, and propoſed, that he ſhould be obliged to be ſilent for five minutes; and this ſentence being approved, he added, to puniſh him further, that he himſelf would not ſwear, till he could find an opportunity of introducing an oath, in ſuch a manner, as to give a grace to the ſentence.

THE tea things had been taken away for ſome time, Mr. Stevens had lighted his pipe, and the watch was placed on the table before Lucius, which my couſin, during the time of his ſilence, continued to examine, with the cloſeſt attention: mean while, the clergyman expreſſed his ſurprize at Lucius's behaviour, and let us know, that he would not only hear him,

him, but would ſit up all night to anſwer ſo wicked a ſermon; and he did not doubt but he ſhould be able to overturn all his arguments; and, therefore, invited the company to hear him the ſucceeding day at church: when he would let them ſee, that a good cauſe could ſuffer nothing by being attacked; adding, that as he had truth and religion on his ſide, he did not doubt but he ſhould be enabled, through divine aſſiſtance, to convince, if not to reform them. Lucius requeſted that he would hear him, before he promiſed too much: and told him that he himſelf, with all his zeal, might approve what he now condemned: however, he deſired him to wait with patience, and, if he was not convinced, he would certainly attend to hear his own arguments refuted. But the ſtranger was averſe to the propoſal of going to church, and my dumb couſin ſhew'd his diſlike to the motion, by ſigns, till he had liberty to ſpeak; and then he loudly exclaimed againſt it.

THE converſation was now more equally divided, and, at the ſame time, it was rendered leſs ſhocking; for whatever were Lucius's ſecret intentions, which we were yet unacquainted with, he had already, by ſiding with them, produced a more happy effect, than

would, probably, have attended all his remonſtrances. Our two travellers ſpoke ſlowly, and with abundance of precaution: and while we were all watching them, my couſin was watching Lucius, frequently interrupting him, to let him know, that in ſuch a place he might handſomely introduce an oath; but Lucius had the advantage of conſtantly proving, that it would flatten, or perplex, the ſenſe of the ſentence: when waiting about half an hour to no purpoſe, my couſin, and his friend, perhaps tired of this reſtraint, took their leave, and, in the moſt obliging manner, left us at liberty, to indulge the pleaſure of a free and unreſerved converſation.

THE clergyman ſaw, and confeſſed, the force of Lucius's ſtratagem; but could comprehend nothing of the ſermon, or his reaſons for contradicting an aſſertion, that had all the force of a ſelf-evident truth: and, as he was now under leſs reſtraint, became very inquiſitive, in order to ſearch into the motives of this extraordinary conduct: but all the anſwer he could obtain from Lucius was, that he was really in earneſt, and that he would give him no reaſon to be diſſatisfied with his performance. So that he was obliged to wait,

wait, as well as the others, till the time appointed to gratify his curiosity took place.

LUCIUS had this day acted in a manner quite opposite to his usual conduct, and I now saw that the man, who had hitherto behaved with such an artless simplicity of manners, had regulated his general behaviour from principle, and from choice; since we found that he was able, upon occasion, to assume a character opposite to his own: and if this, Madam, contradicts any thing I have said of him in my last letter, pray impute it to my ignorance of his abilities. The rest of the afternoon was spent very agreeably, and Mr. Stevens, before he took his leave, gave me a hint, that he saw plainly that Lucius was only playing upon the two travellers; and added, that he would not lose the opportunity of visiting us on Saturday for any consideration.

THE next day, and part of Saturday, Lucius continued locked up in his closet, attended only by young Trueman, who served him as an amanuensis. The company came at the time appointed, together with Mellifont, my aunt, and Amelia, who had received an imperfect account of the affair from her brother; so that Lucius had a tolerable audience. As soon as they were seated, he ask-

ed the two friends, whether they had ſeriouſly conſidered the affair, and if they had found out any important advantages attending the uſe of oaths, and curſes, in converſation. The ſtranger ingeniouſly confeſs'd, that he had conſidered it pretty cloſely, and that, ſo far from ſeeing any advantage in it, he really began to be aſhamed of the habit, and declared, that if he was to think much more about it, he ſhould be obliged to leave it off; for the more he thought of it, the more indefenſible it appeared. Lucius then, deſiring that nobody preſent would take any exceptions to any thing he ſaid, roſe up and began: while all preſent, having their curioſity ſtretched to the utmoſt extent, ſeemed to liſten with extreme eagerneſs and attention. And, as I imagine that yours is attended with little leſs impatience, I here ſend you a copy, which Trueman has juſt tranſcribed for your uſe.

A SERMON *in praiſe of* SWEARING *in converſation.*

DEUT. vi. 13. The latter part of the Verſe.

And SHALT *ſwear by his name.*

THERE is a ſet of men in the world, who need only be known in order to be deſpiſed; men, who are a conſtant ſubject for ridicule, and juſtly the deriſion of the gay and more refined part of the human ſpecies: men who are ſo ſtupid, as to be more enamoured with the pleaſure of a benevolent action, more charmed with giving joy to the helpleſs and miſerable, with drying up the tears of the diſtreſſed, or ſoothing the agonies of the burſting heart, than with the lordly pride of wanton power, than in rendering the wretched more wretched, than with ſpurning at patient merit, or even the ſatisfaction of racking tenants, hoarding wealth, or all the high gratification of a debauch; more delighted with the viſionary pleaſure of indulging their own reflections, and the applauſe of a good conſcience, than with the charms of a bottle, the tranſports afforded by the laſcivious wan-

ton, or all the high-wrought indulgences of a luxurious appetite. And, in one word, to ſum up their character, more afraid of a falſe or even an unneceſſary oath, than of the point of a ſword.

IT is with theſe poor mean-ſpirited wretches, that I am now to combat, in order to ſhew the great advantages that attend a ſtrict compliance with the injuction in my text, *And thou ſhalt ſwear by his name.* I ſhall not here take up your time in examining the context, or even in conſidering what is meant by the command in my text, which ſome would confine to the neceſſary oaths, taken in a court of judicature; but, like all ſound divines, and in compliance with the cuſtom of all good commentators and diſputants, conſider the paſſage before us, in that latitude, which is moſt adapted to anſwer my particular deſign.

ONE man takes his text, and endeavours, with the moſt elaborate eloquence, to prove, that the bible he preaches from is a work not fit to be read; that it never was deſigned for the inſtruction of ſuch blockheads as his audience, who, by looking into it, incur damnation. What concerns all to know, muſt be read by none but the prieſt, or whom he ſhall appoint. How glorious that revelation,

which

which, in the hands of the multitude, points the way to misery, but, in those of the church, to eternal life! It is she alone, who can infallibly inform us, that love, and charity, and compassion, and tenderness, so often mentioned in that old book, the bible, mean spite, and hatred, and inquisition, and burning faggots.

ANOTHER, with pious snuffle, and all the moving force of sighs and groans, prove that the God of truth is the God of falshood; and finding his scheme contradicted, by the language of scripture, from scripture nicely distinguishes between a revealed and a secret will, both opposite, both contradictory to each other. Scripture he proves to be a lye; his opinion he proves to be true from scripture. He wisely turns out common sense, to make room for grace. He degrades reason as being in league with the devil, and, in the pious ardour of his heart, saves himself the trouble of thinking, and cries out—*I believe, because it is impossible.* Ye deists rejoice in these your friends! Admit them into your societies! They, like you, can darken truth, they have assisted you in setting fragment against fragment; and, when the dazzling sun-beams shine too bright, can wisely close their eyes.

Let me too be permitted to rank myſelf on this ſide, and, countenanced by ſuch great authorities, to take a text that ſuits my preſent purpoſe, regardleſs of every other paſſage that may be ſuppoſed to contradict it: nay, regardleſs of the text itſelf, any further than as it may ſerve for a plauſible introduction to what I have to offer.

IT is ſufficient, therefore, that we have here a command to ſwear by the name of God; which I ſhall take, in the common and vulgar ſenſe of the word ſwearing, to mean, not only all manner of oaths, but whatever goes under the denomination of ſwearing in converſation, as oaths, curſes, and imprecations.

IN treating this ſubject I ſhall conſider,

I. THE many advantages attending the frequent uſe of oaths, curſes, and imprecations: in which will be ſufficiently proved, the falſeneſs of that aſſertion, that ſwearing is attended with neither pleaſure nor profit.

II. ANSWER ſome objections. And,

III. MAKE a ſuitable application.

I. I am to conſider the many advantages ariſing from a frequent uſe of oaths, curſes, and imprecations.

IN the *firſt* place, this genteel accompliſh-

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ment is a wonderful help to diſcourſe; as it ſupplies the want of good ſenſe, learning, and eloquence. The illiterate and ſtupid, by the help of oaths, become orators; and he whoſe wretched intellects would not permit him to utter a coherent ſentence, by this eaſy practice, excites the laughter, and fixes the attention, of a brilliant and joyous circle. He begins a ſtory, he is loſt in a vacuity of thought, and would inſtantly, to his eternal diſhonour, become ſilent, did not a ſeries of oaths and imprecations give him time to gather up, or rather ſeek the thread of his diſcourſe: he begins again, again he is loſt, but having complimented his friends, by calling for eternal damnation on them all, he has thought what to ſay next, and finds himſelf able to proceed with a ſentence or two more. Thus he ſtill talks on, while thought follows ſlowly after. Bleſt expedient! by the uſe of which, polite converſation glides on uninterrupted, while ſound is happily ſubſtituted in the place of ſenſe: by this, mankind communicate familiar noiſes to each other, with as little intellectual ability and labour, as a pack of well-match'd hounds; ſo ſoften the object of their delight and admiration! O how prepoſterouſly abſurd then! how falſe, and contrary

to experience, is that ridiculous aſſertion, that ſwearing is attended with neither pleaſure nor profit! For what higher pleaſure, what greater profit and advantage can a man enjoy, than to find, that, *in ſpite of nature, who has directed him to be ſilent*, he can hear himſelf talk—talk without ſtammering, or drawling out each heavy ſentence, that lags behind to wait on thought. Ye ideots rejoice! ye coxcombs, whoſe coſtive brain ne'er dictated the flowing ſentiment, be glad! Ye, whom learning never fired, in ſtupid ignorance loſt, exult! Bleſt with eaſe and indolence, you talk, and thoſe, like you, admire; while liſtening demons clap their wings, and grin applauſe.

FORGIVE me, Sirs, if, fired with my ſubject, I loſe my uſual moderation; for who can help being warmed at the motion of ſuch glorious advantages as theſe? Advantages, which level the converſation of the mighty, and raiſe the oratory of the carman and porter. Here the loweſt frequently excel; the plowman, with clouted ſhoon, outvies his competitors, and practiſes the vices of the gentleman, with more ſucceſs than the lord of the manor; or the ſplendid courtier, though adorned with ſtar and garter. Here no abili-

ties,

ties, no learning, are neceſſary, no ſtudious hours are required to attain perfection. Tropes and figures, all the flowers of oratory, all the pedantry of the ſchools, are vain and uſeleſs trumpery, compared to theſe ornaments: they require pains and ſtudy, nor can be applied without judgment, and the toil of reading what are fooliſhly called, the ingenious and polite authors: but ſwearing is, as I have ſaid, learning to the ignorant, eloquence to the blockhead, vivacity to the ſtupid, and wit to the coxcomb.

SECONDLY, Oaths and curſes are a proof of a moſt heroic courage, at leaſt in appearance, which anſwers the ſame end. For who can doubt the valour, the intrepidity of him who braves the thunder of heaven, who affronts the moſt formidable being in the univerſe, and treats, with contempt, that all-enlivening principle, which ſuſtains and animates the whole creation? To what a noble elation is the heart of the coward conſcious, when he thus defies the Almighty, and imprecates the fires of hell! Let the bluſtering bully domineer, let him roar out his curſes, and threaten all who dare provoke the vengeance of his potent arm; let him terrify by a ſurly frown, and intimidate when, with

portly gait, he vents ten thouſand oaths and curſes on the wretch, who impudently preſumes to oppoſe his mighty will—who dares doubt his courage? Who can believe, that the cane, or the toe, when duly applied, have ſuch magic power, as to make him twiſt and writhe himſelf like a ſerpent, till, with this exerciſe, his joints, and his mind, become ſo ſupple, that he can bend and cringe and aſk pardon? Let the meek ſoldier boaſt his deeds of war, and, with oaths and execrations lace the ſelf-flattering tale; who can believe that ſo great a hero ſhould have an antipathy to the ſight of ſteel? Or that he, who challenges the blaſting lightning to fall on his head, would tremble, and turn pale, at the flaſh of a piſtol? No, this muſt never be imagined; for can it be ſuppoſed that he has leſs bravery in the field than in the tavern? With theſe bluſtering expletives, then, the coward may ſtrut and look big, and every minute give freſh proofs of an invincible courage: he may bravely ſport with that being, whoſe frown would make the heavens and earth to tremble: he may ſeem to ſnatch the vengeance from his uplifted hand, and throw it on his foe: he may invoke the wrath of heaven; and who can imagine that he is afraid

of

of death, when he is continually calling for all the horrors of hell?

THIRDLY, he hereby not only gives a proof of his courage, but informs the world, that he is intirely divested of all the fooliſh prejudices of education, and has unlearnt

All that the nurſe, and all the prieſt have taught:

that he has not only ſhook off the ſhackles of enthuſiaſm, but has baniſhed from his mind, that reverence of the deity, which is the foundation of every ſyſtem of religion. He is not ſuſpected of being ſuch a fool as to want inſtruction, ſince it cannot be imagined, that he has ſo dull a taſte as to go to church, unleſs, if he be a gentleman, to ogle the ladies; if a clown, to ſleep; or, if a tradeſman, in complaiſance to the ſober old women of both ſexes, who happen to be his cuſtomers: and he has this additional advantage, that he will never be taken for a pious churchman, a preſbyterian, a quaker, or a methodiſt. And, in reality, he is ſo far from being a bigot to any religious principles, that he belongs to no religious ſociety upon earth. That he is not, nor cannot be a chriſtian, is evident; for, what is chriſtianity? It is extenſive benevolence, humanity, and virtue,

to which he bids defiance with every curſe. He cannot be a deiſt, becauſe they openly profeſs the utmoſt reverence for the deity; and, for the ſame reaſon, he can neither be a Jew, or a Mahometan, or a follower of Confucius. No, nor even an atheiſt; ſince we cannot conceive, that he would ſo often call upon God, if he was thoroughly convinced there was no ſuch being in the univerſe; however, he every minute lets us ſee, that he does not fear him. How unlicenſed is his freedom, how glorious and unconſtrained! Let the wretches, who meanly bend their wills, and regulate their actions, by the ſage dictates of reaſon and conſcience; who ſtoop to follow the rules of religion, and call them ſacred; let theſe bridle their tongues, let theſe confine themſelves within the narrow limits preſcribed by reaſon and good ſenſe; the ſwearer knows better; ſenſe, and reaſon, and religion, are all ſubſervient to his will; he diſdains their fetters, and rules thoſe which rule all the world beſide.

FOURTHLY, and laſtly, another advantage which attends the vice of the gentleman, this noble accompliſhment, is, that it ſometimes raiſes him to dignity and honour. Under this head, indeed, I take a greater latitude

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and advert to a remote conſequence of the practice of ſwearing: but, as there is ſuch a cloſe concatenation in all our habits, and virtue and vice are progreſſive in their very nature, I ſhould not do complete juſtice to my ſubject, if I omitted the conſideration of it in this particular view. When a man, therefore, by a happy aſſociation of ideas, joins to the other advantages of this vice, ideas of wealth and grandeur; when he ſees no argument, that appears of any weight, to bind him down to the unthriſty rules of honeſty, and his regard for his own private advantage is too ſtrong, to let him have any for the private property of his neighbour; what ſhould hinder him, when a fair opportunity offers, from raiſing himſelf, by the ruin of his neighbour, his companion, or his deareſt friend? He has ſwore to a thouſand lyes in company, without any view of private advantage; what ſhould prevent him then from taking one falſe oath, when the advantage is ſo conſiderable? Surely, neither conſcience, nor reaſon, nor religion, can do this: no, that is impoſſible; for I, who am as infallible as any dignified prieſt, that ever mounted a pulpit, have aſſerted, that theſe are all ſubſervient to his will.

HERE

HERE the ſwearer, with an unbounded ambition, aſpires to ſeize on wealth, and boldly to graſp at thoſe riches, which fortune has fooliſhly given to a more deſerving perſon; and this, in ſpite of JUSTICE and EQUITY, who are his profeſſed enemies. Thus he riſes above the multitude, and gains a laſting fame; not by blood and ſlaughter, but by cunning, deceit, and artifice; by burſting through the moſt ſolemn engagements, breaking in ſunder the bonds of ſociety, and only violating what all honeſt men hold ſacred. Suppoſe, that he fails in his attempt, and the property of the perſon he has attacked remains inviolate: he is conveyed to a caſtle, ſtrong as that of a crown'd head; where no impertinent intruders dare appear to diſturb his repoſe: for in the day time, he has a porter to ſtand at his gate; in the night his faithful attendants lock and bar his doors.

SURROUNDED with guards, he pays a ſolemn viſit at the ſeat of JUSTICE; he has the honour of being admitted to the royal bench; he converſes with that ſovereign perſonage herſelf, and, for a conſiderable time, takes up the whole attention of her prime miniſters, the lords of her court, who, aſſiduous to pay him all due reſpect, wait his coming in their

pre-

proper habiliments; and, though it be ever ſo early in the day, he is never received with the diſreſpectful negligence of an undreſs. The ceremony being over, he is reconducted by the ſame guards who brought him thither, and who dare not preſume to leave him, till he is ſafe within his palace. He now ſoon receives the reward of his baffled dexterity, the glorious fruit of his ambition. The day arrives, devoted to mirth and jollity, buſineſs and care are laid aſide, and every labouring hand has now a holy-day. He walks, or rides in his triumphal car, attended by a numerous throng of gazing ſpectators: he is mounted above their heads, and his neck, not his temples, adorned with a civic wreath, and his wriſts with an embrazure, compoſed of a matter, ſomething coarſer, indeed, than that of pearls and diamonds. This is no ſooner done, than gaping thouſands ſend forth ſhouts of joy, and bending low, even to the ground, pay him homage; then riſing up, with loud acclamations, preſent their tribute, ſtriving who moſt ſhall pay, who oftenеſt bend. He is covered, he is loaded, with their gifts, and ſenſibly touched with their bounty. The more he gains, the more unenvied here he ſtands, while all rejoice, and give the applauſe that is

his

his due. But, let his modeſty be ever ſo great, let his bluſhes be like the trickling drops of crimſon, painting his baſhful cheek, and prompting a willingneſs to retire from theſe honours; yet one hour, at leaſt, he is reſtrained to ſtay, to receive the willing offerings of the multitude. Thrice happy man! had conſcience, or had reaſon ſway'd, thou never hadſt thus been bleſs; unknown thou mighteſt have lived, unknown have died.

II. I COME now, in the ſecond place, to anſwer ſome objections; but as theſe, after what has been ſaid, muſt appear extremely trifling, I ſhall be as conciſe as poſſible, and haſten to a concluſion. It is ſaid,

IN the *firſt* place, that the ſwearer acts in direct oppoſition to all the rules of right reaſon.

BUT how can this be called an objection againſt ſwearing? What have we to do with right reaſon?—We leave it to the dull wretches, the men of reflection: and yet there are ſome of theſe, who attempt to mimic us: but if they act inconſiſtently with their own abilities, let them look to that. An upright man is a downright fool, if he ſwears at all. Let thoſe who can talk without it, extol their won-

wonderous talents; they have no need of this polite vice to recommend them to the world. The ſqueamiſh wretch, who is afraid of a lye, has no need to ſwear to what he ſays, for he is certain that his word will be readily taken. But away with theſe *yea and nay* wretches, men born to be pointed at; the ſheepiſh, the ſober fools, who, regardleſs of the boundleſs liberty we enjoy, talk of rectitude of manners, religion, and conſcience.

SECONDLY, and laſtly, it is objected, that it is one of the moſt ſenſeleſs, unnatural, rude, and unmannerly vices, that ever was invented.

THIS, it muſt be confeſſed, is paying a fine compliment to, at leaſt, half the polite world. How can that be *rude* and *unmannerly*, which gives ſuch a grace to converſation? 'Tis true, we expreſs ourſelves ſtrongly, and uſe none of thoſe languid, ſneaking, epithets in our diſcourſe, which your modeſt men, your men of humanity make uſe of: but as we talk without meaning, nobody can ſay that we mean ill. And, indeed, it is a very injurious expreſſion, to ſay that this is *unnatural*, when ſo many of us have the honour of being univerſally deemed to be little better than *naturals*.

AND

AND now, Sirs, I have proved, ſo effectually, the great advantages, attending the practice of this genteel and faſhionable vice, that there needs but one word by way of application.

CONSIDER, O conſider, how ineſtimable are the advantages I have mentioned! If there is any one here deſirous of obtaining theſe, and yet is troubled, and intimidated, with the impertinence of a reſtleſs conſcience, flying in his face, and threatning to haunt him, like a ghoſt, let him but follow my advice, and conſcience will fall aſleep. Would he ſteel his heart againſt compunction, let him advance by degrees; if he is afraid of an oath, let him come as near it as he can, let him cry, *Egad*, *rammation*, and *o'dam ye*; let him thus chip and carve a few common-place expreſſions, to fit them to his conſcience, and the buſineſs will be done. This practice will render familiar, and the coward, who firſt trembled at the thought of hell, will ſoon have the courage to call for damnation.

AND now, ye, who have long indulged this vice, who have arrived at perfection in this great accompliſhment, and, by this means, have gained that applauſe, which nature would have denied you, which reaſon refuſed, and con-

conſcience condemned: you, I ſay, who, by the aſſiſtance of this vice, have diſtinguiſhed yourſelves, either as the orator, the pimp, or the bully: you who, with more diſtinguiſhed glory, have graced the lofty pillory; and you who, under ſpecious oaths of ſpeedy marriage, have violated virgin innocence, and rewarded the maid, that loved you, with eternal infamy; conſider theſe noble advantages, applaud, congratulate yourſelves, and rejoice: you have not ſtopped at the moſt flagrant impieties; you have challenged, and defied, the blaſting power of heaven to do its worſt, and with a diſintereſtedneſs, peculiar to yourſelves, have generouſly ſold the reverſion of eternal, inexhauſtible happineſs, merely for the pleaſure of affronting that great beneficent being, who has prepared it for you, your indulgent creator, and almighty friend. How nobly ungrateful! how unſelfiſh your conduct! Boaſt your bravery, and conſider the wiſdom of the exchange: for how blind muſt you be to every ſelf-intereſted view, how deaf to the calls of ſelf-love, while infinite unbounded felicity has no charms, when ſtanding in competition with the delight of affronting a benefactor, with the pleaſure of a curſe, and the ſatisfaction of hearing your own impertinence!

STU-

STUPIDITY, IGNORANCE, and FOLLY, are on your ſide: act, therefore, like men, who profeſs to be their friends, and like the true enemies of REASON, RELIGION, VIRTUE, and COMMON SENSE. You have ſeen your practice juſtified with advantages, which you have never before thought of: if theſe have any weight, if theſe have any charms, let them have all their influence. To ſum up all, let every man act conſiſtently with his real character, and, by his indulgence of this practice, or his forbearance, let his abilities, or his follies, ſtand confeſſed."

YOU have now, I ſuppoſe, read this extraordinary performance; but the ſtriking action, the natural expreſſion varied into different tones; the ſneering air in which he uttered ſome ſentences, and the thundering pompous manner in which he pronounced thoſe bordering on the bombaſt, you can form no idea of: theſe are ſtill behind, and not to be expreſſed, even though I ſhould endeavour to follow the example of that memorable preacher, who inſerted, in the margin of his printed ſermon, the proper places where to cough, and where to blow his noſe. Lucius had carefully ſtudied theſe particulars, which,

which, however trifling they may appear, are eſſential parts of oratory. Theſe ſurpaſſed all deſcription, they gave life and energy to the diſcourſe, every ſentence was animated with a degree of fire, peculiar to itſelf, which, at once, warmed our minds, and ſpread abroad the light of conviction.

LUCIUS had no ſooner concluded this long harangue, than the ſtranger appeared moſt forward to thank him, and not only acknowledged the ſatire juſt, but very honeſtly confeſſed, that he felt the force of every word, that he was ſhocked at a practice he had too much indulged, and reſolved never more to be guilty of it. My couſin ſaid, he believed Lucius was run mad, and that he could not underſtand half of it. The clergyman, though he liked it very well in the main, thought it bordered a little upon the profane; but Mr. Stevens was very warm in its defence, as was my aunt, Mellifont, and Amelia, though the latter objected to the puns and play upon words; which Lucius vindicated, as agreeable to the ridiculous character he was ſometimes obliged to aſſume, and as moſt likely to ſtrike the attention of thoſe perſons he had in view, who are commonly pleaſed with mere ſounds,

and

and but little influenced by arguments that require reflection.

I AM ſo uſed to write long letters to you, that I hardly know how to ſend you a ſhort one. It is a week ſince I began this; it is therefore time to conclude, and to aſſure you, that I am very ſincerely

YOUR LADYSHIP'S
conſtant friend,
FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XL.

DEAR MADAM,

WHEN I concluded my laſt, I had ſeveral things to add, which I think worthy of notice, and, therefore, without any further preface, I ſhall continue the ſubject.

THE perſon, whom I have hitherto diſtinguiſhed, by the name of my couſin's fellow traveller, and whoſe real name is Smith, now expreſſed an extraordinary eſteem for Lucius, which did not ſeem to fall very ſhort of the moſt cordial friendſhip. His confidence and aſſurance, which was before the ſource of great impertinence, was, at this time, (permit, Ma-

Madam, the expreſſion) melted down by a kind of deference and ſhame, ariſing from a ſenſe of folly, and a conſciouſneſs of ſuperior worth, into a modeſt manly diffidence, which ſerv'd to check the firſt impulſes to an idle gaity; and cured him, at leaſt in our company, of that forward talkative temper, which had before rendered his converſation very diſguſtful. His ingenuity in confeſſing his crime, prepoſſeſſed us in his favour, and we ſoon found him a ſenſible companion, in ſpite of that thoughtfulneſs that now threw a cloud over his natural vivacity—a thoughtfulneſs that ſeem'd to derive its ſource from a ſenſe of inward guilt, and the ſecret reproaches of his own mind. My aunt made him a very handſome compliment on that open frankneſs of heart, which had made him dare to confeſs that he had been in an error; but ſhe could not do this without a ſigh, and giving an affectionate look at her ſon. Lucius let us know, that ſhe had ſpoke his ſentiments, and he was now regarded as a perſon worthy of being admitted, to a nearer, and more intimate acquaintance. Mr. Smith, though very much taken up with his own thoughts, ſeemed extremely aſſiduous to pleaſe and to render himſelf agreable to every perſon in the company; but more eſpecially ſo to

Lucius. He obſerved the reſpect, the friendſhip, the ſweet complacency, that ſubſiſted between Mellifont, Mr. Stevens, and us; he inſtantly regarded theſe two gentlemen as his friends, and addreſſed them in a manner, very different to his former behaviour. He obſerved the regard we expreſſed for the worthy clergyman, he now, therefore, treated him with reſpect. My couſin ſeemed to have loſt his friend, and having nobody to ſtrike out his feeble ſpark of fire, and to give him an opportunity to diſplay his talents, ſat ſilent, with a moſt forlorn and diſconſolate countenance, his eyes fixed on Mr. Smith, and a viſible uneaſineſs, at ſeeing him engroſs ſo much of the converſation, and in ſuch a manner too, as rendered it impoſſible for him to have any ſhare in it. He was, therefore, out of his element: he was jealous of the ſuperior reſpect ſhewn to his friend: he was confounded, diſappointed in all his high raiſed hopes of future pleaſure, and yet knew not how to complain. In ſhort, he appeared like the figure of moping melancholy, ſeated on a tomb. What a ſurpriſing metamorphoſis!

THE reſt of the day was ſpent with great ſatisfaction; for though the ſubjects of diſcourſe were extremely grave, yet our minds par-

partook of that ſober, ſolemn, kind of entertainment, which, while we enjoy it, is attended with more delight, than the frolic laugh of mirth, and which has the power of accompanying, with a ſerene ſatisfaction, the moſt diſtant reflections: and indeed, ſo exquiſitely ſweet were theſe calmly-pleaſing, and ſelf-approving ſenſations, and ſo intent were they all on the ſubjects of converſation, that they did not depart till late in the evening, and, even then, it was with a viſible reluctance.

THEY had all prepared to go, when Mr. Smith, taking Lucius and me aſide, ſaid, with an affectionate tone of voice, I hope you will both forgive my impertinent behaviour at my firſt viſit; and I am the more ſollicitous about this, as I have the ambition of being ranked among the number of your friends. Can you, Sir, can you, Madam, excuſe my folly? I am thoroughly ſenſible of it, in every particular, and am as heartily aſhamed of it: I wiſh your couſin was ſo too: as for me, I am going to lament in private. My boaſted travels, the ſubject of my former vanity, have been the ſource of a thouſand extravagancies; inſtead of improving, they have only ſerved to debauch my mind: but theſe are no ſooner finiſhed, than I meet with a perſon, who ſets

them before me, in the trueſt light. The contraſt between you and me, has been too glaring not to be obſerved—what a wretch do I think myſelf!—but I muſt no ſooner know, than leave you—I leave you with reluctance, and it is very probable, that I ſhall never ſee you again. Lucius replyed, by giving him the moſt frank and engaging aſſurances of his friendſhip, and, two days after, he ſet forward on his journey. But it is time to return to ourſelves.

PRUDILLA, Madam, has now breathed her laſt, but, notwithſtanding her former terror and agitation of mind, her laſt minutes were perfectly compoſed; and as nature was quite ſpent, ſhe left the world without thoſe ſtruggles, and convulſive agonies, which render that aweful moment ſo terrible, with perſons of ſtronger ſpirits.

WE have been ſeveral times to my father's to ſee the child, and both my mother, and my ſiſter Marilla, ſeem perfectly fond of it. It is really an engaging little creature, and I think it impoſſible for me to help loving it. My duty, in this caſe, is extremely eaſy, ſince it is attended with all the pleaſure of following my own inclinations, joined to the additional ſatisfaction it gives to Lucius.

AN

AN affair has juſt happened, which gives me great uneaſineſs, the particulars of which I ſhall acquaint you with, in my next. I am

your ever affectionate

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLI.

DEAR MADAM,

I AM now to relate to you the cauſe of that uneaſineſs, I mentioned in my laſt; for as you have hitherto been the confident of all my little affairs, I have contracted ſuch a habit of laying my thoughts before you, that I really believe I ſhould find no ſmall difficulty in concealing from you any circumſtance in which I have an immediate concern. How great is the force of cuſtom! no ſooner does any thing the leaſt extraordinary happen, but I conſider it as contributing to your amuſement; and frequently ſit down to acquaint you with my affairs, even before I have ſufficiently reflected, whether they are of importance enough to deſerve your notice: ſo that whether you are diverted with my ſtory, or

diſguſted with my impertinence, depends entirely upon chance.

SOME time ago, I took a ſervant on the recommendation of a poor, though honeſt, old woman in the neighbourhood; but I needed not the character ſhe gave me, to prepoſſeſs me in her favour. The innocence and artleſs modeſty of her looks, and the eaſy unconſtrained freedom of her behaviour, were the firſt things that I took notice of, and which really inſpired me with a favourable opinion of her virtue and diſcretion: but this opinion was ſoon heightened by the ſweetneſs of her temper, and a certain languor in her looks. I hardly ever found her alone, but I obſerved her in tears; from hence I began to pity her, and, by degrees, this pity aroſe to a kind of friendſhip. I, therefore, made her ſervice as eaſy to her as poſſible, and from being, at firſt, my chamber-maid, raiſed her to be my woman. As her conſtitution was very delicate, this was a ſtation that I thought ſhe had the greateſt reaſon to be ſatisfied with. But, though ſhe expreſſed the higheſt ſenſe of gratitude, yet I could diſcover no alteration in her diſpoſition. Being ſtill deſirous to contribute to her ſatisfaction, I endeavoured, by all the ways I could think of, to diſcover the cauſe

of

of her uneaſineſs; but ſhe evaded all my enquiries with ſo much politeneſs and good ſenſe, that I reſolved, at length, to put a ſtop to my curioſity, till time ſhould wear off her reſerve, or ſome accident, without her conſent, inform me of her affairs.

YOUR ladyſhip is, perhaps, offended at my offering to entertain you with the trifling affairs of my ſervants, in which you are ready to imagine, there can be nothing of importance enough to engage my concern: but have patience,—I don't doubt but I ſhall ſoon obtain your approbation with regard to this particular.

I HAD been called away in the middle of my laſt letter to you, and was returning to my chamber to finiſh it. When recollecting, that I ſhould want to uſe a ſtick of ſealing wax, which I had, the day before, giving to my favourite Dorothea, who, at her own requeſt, was gone to Nottingham, I ſtepped into her room to look for it. But how great was my ſurprize! when I beheld, upon her table, a gold ſnuff-box, finely chaſed. What could I think! I called Lucius; he came, and, at firſt, ſuggeſted every argument he could think of, to remove my ſuſpicions: but comparing the poſſeſſion of ſo valuable a box, with Do-

rothea's circumſtances, and the manner in which ſhe was recommended to me, he was induced to confirm the opinion I had conceived of her diſhoneſty. We both concluded that I had careſſed an artful, abandoned, wretch: upon which, a number of circumſtances preſently roſe in our minds, that ſtrengthened this heavy charge. Her box was inſtantly broke open, when, among other things, we found a crucifix ſet with diamonds, and a chaplet of pearls, and a maſs book in Latin and Engliſh. Lucius was enraged, and inſiſted, that ſhe ought to ſuffer the penalty of the law, and that he could neither excuſe it to himſelf, nor to his country, to ſcreen her from juſtice: ſince, in that caſe, he ſhould be anſwerable for the next robbery ſhe committed. We both bleſſed the diſcovery we had made, and did not at all queſtion but ſhe waited for an opportunity to let in a gang of thieves, in the night, to rob, and, perhaps, murder us in our ſleep: and what confirmed this ſuſpicion was, our preſently hearing from the ſervants, that ſhe had ſeveral times been ſeen to give ſilver to ſome ſhabby, ill-looking, fellows, who, under pretence of begging, frequently came to the door. Thus prejudice, Madam, when once raiſed, is a medium that change

changes the colour of objects, and ſhapes them to our fancy. Our fears being awaked, imagination is ſet to work, to invent new ſcenes of ideal horror. We then deal in nothing but the gloomy and the diſmal; we ſtart at the rovings of our diſtempered minds; new dangers ariſe at every thought; we catch at every cauſe of diſcontent, and, anxious to ſwell the inward perturbation, ſearch only for freſh grounds of uneaſineſs. No wonder that the object, that raiſes theſe horrid ſenſations, grows every moment more deformed. While we view only the ſhades of the direful character, we conclude the whole to be dark and odious; virtue becomes affectation, beauty a maſk, and every perfection hypocriſy, put on only to conceal ſome deadly purpoſe. Thus, by a kind of contraſt, deformity itſelf becomes more deformed. From hence we precipitately concluded, that, as we had reaſon to believe her a thief, ſhe was a murderer too, and regarded ourſelves as victims to be ſacrificed to her avarice. How frightful the thought! Old Mr. Trueman was called to give us his opinion, when he adviſed us to ſend to the next juſtice for a warrant, to procure a conſtable, and to ſearch the poor woman's houſe, who had recommended her.

THE warrant was ſoon procured, when Lucius and I, with the good old man, attended the conſtable, to ſee if we could find any thing there, belonging to us. The old woman was terrified to the laſt degree. She was ſurrounded with many conveniencies, which, a ſhort time before, ſhe was known to want, and ſeemed raiſed, in ſome degree, to a comfortable independance. From whence could this ariſe; but from her being a neceſſary inſtrument in Dorothea's crimes? This was the inference we drew from it. Mr. Trueman, therefore, ſecured her, and let her know that ſhe muſt not leave the houſe; but ſhe appeared more concerned for her friend, than herſelf: ſhe would not hear of her being a thief: ſhe ran on in her praiſes. At laſt, a tea-cheſt was found, and ſhe readily acknowledged it was Dorothea's, and that ſhe had the key. It was, therefore, broke open, when we found in it upwards of fifty guineas, ſome broad-pieces, ſeveral very fine rings, a gold watch, wrapped up in cotton, to prevent its being damaged: but what ſtruck me moſt, was a pair of diamond ear-rings. Theſe I was perſuaded I knew again: I was convinced that they were the ſame, which my father gave me, to keep in remembrance of my dear mamma;

mamma; and which he had preſented to her before their marriage. What could I ſay? I would not have loſt them for ten times their real value. Had I not reaſon to be enraged? —To rob me of what ſhe knew I deemed invaluable—of what I priz'd on my dear mother's account—me, who had given her my eſteem, and my friendſhip—me, who had raiſed her from nothing—who had careſſed her; who had loaded her with obligations, and advanced her almoſt to the character of my companion: how ungrateful! and yet this robbery was, in all probability, only a prelude to the miſchief ſhe was to bring upon us.

THESE, Madam, were my reflections, and thus I vented aloud my reſentment, while the poor woman, terrified almoſt to death, cry'd, and, with many ſighs and tears, lamented the ruin of a girl, who had been ſo kind a benefactreſs; intermixing loud, and violent proteſtations of her own innocence.

AFTER the ſearch was finiſhed, the conſtable was ordered to keep the woman a priſoner, in her own houſe, till Dorothea's return, when he was to take them together before the magiſtrate, who had granted the warrant. Mean while we went home, and I, with a

ſorrowful aching heart, retired, with Lucius to talk over the affair, and to wait the return of Dorothea. Almoſt every ſervant in the houſe ſhewed their envy, by putting the moſt invidious conſtruction upon her actions, and had I been diſpoſed to liſten to them, I verily believe they would never have ceaſed their invectives: all the miſchief that had been done in the houſe would have been, by ſome one or other, laid at her door, and ſhe was, indeed, charged with faults, of which I knew her entirely innocent.

WE had waited about an hour for her return, when my chambermaid told me that ſhe was come home; that they had charged her with the fact, and that her very looks condemned her. Lucius gave immediate orders to have her taken to the poor woman's, and that the conſtable ſhould carry them both before the juſtice; adding, that he would follow them immediately. This news was no ſooner carried down, than we heard an extraordinary buſtle, and, upon ringing the bell to know what was the matter, a ſervant came to inform us, that ſhe had the impudence to diſpute their maſter's commands, and refuſed to go till ſhe had ſeen me. I then gave orders that ſhe ſhould be brought up. But I had

hardly

hardly ſpoke the word, when ſhe burſt open the door, and ran into the room, attended by the cook-maid, and another or two of the lower ſervants, who ſtopp'd at the door. She came up to me as if for protection, and ſtood trembling, pale, and out of breath: In ſhort, ſhe had loſt her cap; her hair was in the utmoſt diſorder, and her cloaths almoſt torn from her back. What an affecting ſight! Lucius ſeemed ſhocked, and demanded what was the reaſon of their treating her in this manner, with a tone of voice that ſufficiently expreſſed his diſapprobation. They laid the fault on her, who would not let them take her away civilly: when Lucius obſerving that they had no right to uſe violence without his leave, and ordering them ſternly to withdraw, our thoughts were turned upon the ſingle object, that, with a look of terror ſtood panting before us. Indeed, Madam, my heart relented. Struck with a figure ſo moving, I could ſcarcely refrain from tears; but the next moment, recollecting that ſhe was a thief, a vile hypocrite, who had abuſed my good nature, indignation again uſurped the place of pity.

AFTER a ſhort ſilence, Lucius, with a ſtern voice, began, Thou wicked unhappy wretch,

ſaid he, don't attempt to excuſe and palliate your crimes; but, by an open confeſſion, diſcover whom you have robbed, what were your intentions, and who are your accomplices. This, I aſſure you, will be the only way to obtain mercy: for, upon theſe conſiderations, I now promiſe to make uſe of all my influence in your favour.—O Sir! O Madam! cry'd ſhe, interrupting him with an aſſured air; for God's ſake hear me. You know not who I am—If I do not convince you that I am injured—extremely injured, let me ſuffer all that the law can inflict. Let me tell you, Sir, that I neither aſk, nor deſire mercy.—The innocent have no need of mercy.—Take care,—take care of what you ſay, reply'd Lucius; I would give a great deal to find you innocent; but ſuch ſtrong circumſtances! I wiſh, with all my heart, ſaid I, that you could prove your innocence, but I am afraid that is impoſſible; ſuch convincing proofs! and my ear-rings too! What ear-rings, Madam? returned ſhe, without a bluſh: you will not ſurely ſay, that I have ſtole your ear-rings. Yes, ſaid Lucius, they were found in a tea-cheſt that belongs to you: and I have them here to produce before the magiſtrate.

IT was obſervable that the terror, which, at firſt, had all the ſymptoms of guilt, wore off every moment; and, indeed, fear and affright impreſs upon the countenance of the moſt innocent, marks which may be eaſily miſtaken for indications of the conſcious wickedneſs of an abandoned mind. How abſurd then is it, for people to pretend to form a judgment, from ſuch equivocal appearances! She now, very calmly, deſired to ſee the ear-rings. Lucius took them out of a piece of paper, and gave them into her hand, when, inſtead of the confuſion, which I expected to find in her countenance, ſhe replied, So, I find I am condemned for ſtealing what is my own. Yours! ſaid I, amaz'd; you will not ſurely ſay, that thoſe ear-rings are yours! How could you come by them? Beſides, I dare ſay they are mine. Why, girl, I could ſwear it. Hold, hold, Madam, ſaid ſhe, are yours loſt then? Are they not in your dreſſing-box? I have not ſo much as looked, I replied; however to convince you, I will look now, tho' I am perſuaded it will be to no purpoſe. I know them too well to be miſtaken. Here I went for my dreſſing-box, and bringing it, with much difficulty, under my arm, opened it before her, when, to my entire confuſion,

the

the firſt thing I caſt my eyes on, was the very ear-rings I had laid to her charge. I bluſh'd, and was ſo ſtruck with the ſight, that I had not the power to ſpeak a word. Lucius, therefore, reſumed. Well, Dorothea, ſaid he, your innocence, in this particular, is ſufficiently recommended: how glad ſhould we be, if it was poſſible for you to clear yourſelf of the reſt: but how you could come by them, I cannot imagine: I am afraid not honeſtly. I ſhould rejoice to find that we have injured you, and would, in that caſe, make you all poſſible ſatisfaction. But firſt put yourſelf in a little order,—your cap, Dorothea—your cap—— but, admitting you innocent, which, I muſt tell you, I much doubt of, a glaſs of wine may be neceſſary to raiſe your ſpirits. She now looked in the glaſs, and, bluſhing, began in a hurry, to ſtroak and tie up her long diſhevell'd locks, with all the eager concern of a mind that had no other object in view, but a regard for decency: telling me, at the ſame time, that the conſciouſneſs that ſhe could clear herſelf, whenever ſhe pleaſed, was a better ſupport to her ſpirits, than all the wine in the world. Her cap, which, being faſtened to her hair, hung low down her back, was preſently put on, and by the confuſion in her looks,

looks, and the readineſs with which ſhe dreſſed her head, pinned up the rents in her gown, and reduced herſelf into a more becoming figure, let us ſee that nothing but ſuch an extraordinary perturbation of mind, as that ſhe was in, when ſhe ran into the room, could have made her ſo long inattentive to the decorums of her ſex. When ſhe had finiſhed this taſk, ſhe began:

I AM now to appear in a very different character from that, in which you have hitherto known me. I am obliged to throw off the diſguiſe of a ſervant, and to reveal a ſecret, which I would gladly have kept within my own breaſt, at leaſt, for ſome time longer. Your ſuſpicions, I perceive, ariſe from your finding a few things of value, in the poſſeſſion of a ſervant, one whom you took into your houſe, under the appearance of indigence, and low birth. In order then to be reſtored to your favour, I have nothing more to do, but to convince you that I am born of a very honourable family, and that I may reaſonably expect a fortune, ſufficient to entitle me to wear theſe objects of your ſuſpicion. My father, who is now living, is a baronet, and enjoys a very plentiful eſtate in Lincolnſhire; he was married to a lady of the Romiſh religion;

ligion; and a mutual agreement was made to prevent any future uneaſineſs, with regard to the education of their children. According to this agreement, my brother was educated a proteſtant, while I was brought up by my mother in her own principles; but ſhe dying about three years ago, I ſoon, too ſoon, felt the effects of her loſs. She was ſcarcely buried, when my religious liberties were invaded: my father confeſſor was forbid to come near me; I was continually importuned with the ſollicitations of miniſters, whom my religion made it criminal for me to hear; my diſregard of their inſtructions was reſented as the higheſt act of diſobedience. And thus, by performing what I thought my duty, I incurred a father's diſpleaſure. If I ſtopped my ears to the arguments that were offered me, it was ſaid that I reſolved to be deaf to the voice of truth. They gave me a bible—I durſt not read it; they would read it to me, but it was unlawful for me to hear them, and, therefore, I would not ſuffer them to do it; this was conſtrued into obſtinacy. I durſt not be ſo vain as to conſult my own ſhallow reaſon, when I did not know but it might contradict the infallible doctrines of our holy church. I was now treated with extreme ſeverity; but, at laſt,

laſt, wearied out by my father's, and my brother's importunities, I reſolved to appear more tractable, and even went ſo far, as ſometimes to ſuffer myſelf to be conducted to the pariſh church, and to pretend, at leaſt, that I was almoſt convinced: but this piece of hypocriſy was ſoon puniſhed; it reached my director's ears; when, prompted by a zeal for my ſalvation, he, in my father's abſence, got admiſſion into the houſe, and gave me a very ſevere lecture, on the inſincerity of my conduct; exhorted me to be ſtedfaſt, and confirmed me by abundance of pious arguments: but before he had done, my father, who had been ſent for by ſomebody that ſaw him in the houſe, and who had overheard great part of his diſcourſe, entered the room in a violent paſſion, threatened to ſend the good man to jail, and actually kicked him down ſtairs.

I WAS now treated with more ſeverity than ever, was locked up in my room, and never permitted to ſee any company, but ſuch as were moſt diſagreeable. A gentleman was introduced to me, and I was forced to receive his addreſſes; he was a zealous churchman, and ſo aſſiduous to pleaſe my father, that, in his preſence, he ſeldom ſpoke of any thing but religion; and thus paying his court

to

to him, inſtead of me, made him not more his friend, than he made me his enemy. A day was appointed, for my being married to the man in the world I had the greateſt averſion to: what could I do? my prayers and intreaties were all to no purpoſe. I was drove to the laſt extremity, and had no other reſource, but flight. I, therefore, one moonlight night, when all were in bed, diſguiſed myſelf, and taking ſome of my mother's, and my own jewels, with the little money I had, putting it all, except five guineas, in a tea-cheſt, made my eſcape out of the houſe, by dropping out of the window, which was only one ſtory high, and fled to the prieſt: but he not daring to conceal me, procured me a horſe, and the ſame night I ſet out, hardly knowing where I went, and, the next day, reached this place before noon; when being very weary, I found a poor woman, to whom I told as much of my ſtory as I thought neceſſary to raiſe her compaſſion; to her I gave the horſe, which I had before paid for; and, by her recommendation, I had the favour of being admitted into your houſe as a ſervant.

OUR ſurpriſe, Madam, exceeded all deſcription; we let her go on without interruption

ruption, merely for want of words proper to form our excuſes. For my part, a number of circumſtances, as ſhe proceeded, aroſe in my mind, that confirmed every word ſhe ſpoke, with the force of the moſt convincing evidence: the genteel air of her dreſs, her polite unconſtrained behaviour, on all occaſions, joined to an extenſive knowledge of the works of many of the moſt polite authors. I recollected that I had once heard her repeat a few lines from Taſſo, and I had ſome reaſon to believe, that ſhe was a perfect miſtreſs, both of the French and Italian languages. She is a papiſt.—Her excuſes for not joining in the family devotion, the frivolous pretences with which ſhe always avoided reading to me any piece of religion—It was certainly ſo—ſhe muſt be a papiſt—I thought both Lucius and myſelf perfect fools for not ſeeing thro', and knowing her in this diſguiſe, a diſguiſe too thin to hide her character from the leaſt diſcerning eye. I looked at her perſon:—I was ſtruck at the diſorder of her dreſs—frightful diſorder! could I ſee it without redoubled confuſion? I reflected on the indignities ſhe had ſuffered—brutal indignities! A lady of fortune and diſtinction—my ſuperior—what ſavage treatment! how much ſhe was injured!

red! What a buſtle had we been making about nothing, only to ſhew our ignorance, and haſty paſſion! Lucius was juſtly confounded, and hung down his head. She was ſtill ſtanding. Pray, Madam, be ſeated, ſaid I. She obey'd, and took a chair, and while we were meditating an apology for our preposterous behaviour, ſhe reſumed.

I KNOW, Madam, that I pay my court to a Proteſtant, with a very ill grace, when I attempt to do it, by confeſſing myſelf a Catholic; but I know, however, that you will vindicate me from a crime, which you have unjuſtly laid to my charge. I can, in this caſe, give ſuch additional teſtimonies of my innocence, as to ſtrike malice itſelf dumb. Much more ſhall I convince you, of whoſe goodneſs, and humanity, I have received a number of ſuch pleaſing inſtances as I never ſhall forget. Yet as I am a Roman, you will, probably, join with my father, and, while you preach to me of perſecution and prejudice, ſufficiently ſhew, like him, that you are capable of both. But do not, Sir, O do not, Madam, abuſe the confidence I have repoſed in you. Don't give me up to the reſentment of my relations. No, Madam, cry'd Lucius, I will intermeddle in your

your affairs no farther than you are pleaſed to approve.—But what apology ſhall I make? How ſhall I excuſe our conduct?—You have been uſed ſo ill, that it is a kind of folly to aſk your pardon. Indeed, I am aſhamed, and perfectly ſorry for my behaviour; and what recompence is in our power to make you, freely demand it. I thank you, Sir, returned ſhe, ſmiling; there is really no reaſon at all for theſe apologies. I cannot help ſaying, that appearances were againſt me, and while you thought me what I ſeemed, you ought to have done what you did.—This is very generous, Madam, ſaid I, and the only return we can make, is to intereſt ourſelves in your happineſs. I thank you both, ſaid ſhe: but will you not then take part with my father? Do you promiſe to leave me, whilſt I ſtay with you, to the free enjoyment of the only true religion? Yes, Madam, Lucius reply'd, I promiſe it to you very ſincerely. I am an enemy to perſecution, and to every attempt to force the conſcience, however miſinformed. A true proteſtant, from principle, hates all religious tyranny. He is, by profeſſion, the friend of liberty, and ought, therefore, to check every unjuſt ſally, that would lead him to violate it on the meaneſt object. We allow of no inquiſition.

quiſition. The man, who is a bigot, and yet diſclaims infallibility, is a contradiction to himſelf: a contradiction! as great as any we can lay to your charge. We, believe me, Madam, deal not in contradiction: ours is the religion of common ſenſe: we aſk not a blind obedience; nor do we attempt, by ſhutting the bible, and laying the underſtanding in fetters, to cloſe the eyes, and the ears, to the voice of God. I, therefore, blame your father, and reſolve to make uſe of all my power, to reſtore you to a perfect liberty; to awaken his affection, and, conſequently, to give you a proper ſhare in his fortune; and to do this only in concert with you. Mean while, make uſe of this houſe as your own. I ſincerely thank you, ſaid ſhe, and ſhall readily embrace your offer. To be reſtored to my father's affection, is, indeed, a bleſſing equal to my higheſt ambition. To be reſtored to this, without wounding my conſcience!— I ſhould have nothing more to wiſh for. O my heart! how it longs for the tender union! But the flattering hope is vain, vain indeed! how ſhall I ſee him! with what indignation will he look upon his daughter, a fugitive, an alien, a wretch, in his opinion, deſerving his utmoſt hatred. Methinks, I ſee him ſtand before

before me, and, with a ſtern and ſteady look, reproach and upbraid me, for the uneaſineſs I have given him. Ah! Madam! added ſhe, you have often found me in tears: you can now no longer wonder at the cauſe!—I fear I muſt ſtill be unhappy—perhaps not: however, I will hope the beſt. Here ſhe endeavoured to compoſe her looks, and wiping her eyes, which began to ſwim with tears, ſhe reſumed, Well, I will indulge the pleaſing reflection of embracing him, who was once the tendereſt, moſt kind, and obliging parent. As to my fortune, that is already ſecure, by the marriage ſettlement: as the daughters were to be educated in my mother's principles, they were to poſſeſs her jointure; and, as I am the only daughter, it muſt all devolve to me, after my father's deceaſe. How happy will your friendſhip be to me! how richly ſhall I be repaid for the ſhort uneaſineſs you have given me, if, by your means, I can live, with peace and pleaſure, in my father's houſe!

I now thought it high time to let her ſee, that I had the ſame ſentiments as Lucius. I gave her very affectionate teſtimonies of my friendſhip, mingled with apologies for the ſeverity of my treatment. I inſiſted that ſhe ſhould make uſe of my cloaths, and dreſs

more ſuitably to her birth and fortune. Lucius took this opportunity to ſend to the conſtable, and to deſire him to leave our old neighbour at liberty; and, after making him a ſmall preſent for his trouble, and the poor woman a conſiderable one, as a recompence for the uneaſineſs we had given her, they both ſeemed perfectly ſatisfied.

WE preſently found, that the ſervants, who had treated the young lady ſo ill, in a character more upon a level with theirs, had acted only from pride. They were all greatly offended at her not entering into their little cabals; at her not ſeeming fond of their company: they imagined that ſhe thought herſelf above them, and, as ſhe was preferred before them by me, they ſuſpected that I encouraged her ſelf-conceit, and, on this account, ſhe was both envied and hated: they, therefore, rejoiced to ſee her pulled down, and contributed all they could to preſs her ſtill lower. But now ſhe was placed in a more exalted view, and no proper ſubject for their envy, their was a total change in their diſpoſitions: her company, whenever it had been granted them, was an honour, that, in the reflection, tickled their vanity; ſhe had conferred a ſort of dignity on their ſtation, and was the kind-

eſt,

eſt, moſt obliging lady, and ſo humble, that ſhe ſeemed rather to be born a ſervant like them, than a baronet's daughter. What fine things are birth and fortune! happy accompliſhments! that can thus change our actions, even in thoſe minute circumſtances, that are altogether indifferent!——But let me ſtop the current of my reflections.

TWENTY times, I believe, I have been obliged to break off, and as often have I reſumed my ſubject. I am now very much indiſpoſed, and ſhall, therefore, take this opportunity to conclude, and to aſſure your ladyſhip, that I am, and ever ſhall be,

your faithful friend,
FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLII.

I Can now, Madam, give you the concluſion of Dorothea's ſtory. One morning, about a week after that day of uneaſineſs and unjuſt ſuſpicions, which I deſcribed in my laſt, the young lady came into my room, juſt at the time I was dreſſing, and inſiſted, with a good deal of gaity, on performing her uſual

taſk, which, however, I refuſed: but ſhe ſtaid till the ſervant, who had taken her office, was gone: when, ſitting down by me, Dear Madam, ſaid ſhe, did not you obſerve, that I avoided coming before Mr. Smith, the gentleman who was your couſin's companion in his travels? I really knew him, at firſt ſight. My father has a ſeat in Yorkſhire, not far diſtant from his father's. As the two old gentlemen are intimate friends, my brother, and young Mr. Smith, whenever we choſe to reſide in that part of the country, were conſtant companions. His father frequently brought him to our houſe, ſo that, though his perſon is conſiderably altered, it was impoſſible for me not to know him. All my fear was leſt he ſhould diſcover me, under the diſguiſe I had aſſumed. When he was here, I wiſhed him a hundred times out of the houſe, and, while you were in the room with him, I was, more than once, put to a terrible ſtreight, by your ſending for me, to bring in ſomething you wanted. I dreaded to ſee him, almoſt as much as I ſhould have done my father. And, indeed, it appeared to me the ſame thing; for if he diſcovered me, he would certainly have made no ſecret of the place and ſituation in which he found me.

He.

He was never here, but I was in the greateſt uneaſineſs; and all the while he ſtaid, I felt the moſt terrible palpitation of heart.

Now I recollect the circumſtance, Madam, ſaid I, I could not help taking notice of the many excuſes you made, to avoid coming into the room; and I thought there was ſome myſtery in your behaviour, which I could not comprehend. But I cannot help obſerving, that had I been ſo unfortunate as to have thought of this yeſterday, I ſhould have conſtrued it greatly to your diſadvantage: and fooliſhly imagined, that it proceeded from a conſcious guilt, and, perhaps, a fear of being diſcovered by a perſon of the very family you had robbed of ſuch valuable effects. How blind are we! how eaſily hurried away by appearances! and how careful ought we to be in forming a judgment of others! I am now glad—heartily glad, that I did not, by recollecting this circumſtance, encreaſe my own uneaſineſs, and your ill treatment. I never was ſo thoroughly convinced, as I am at preſent, that even forgetfulneſs, amongſt our other imperfections, has its advantages. May I learn from this, to be ever cautious of cenſure, and afraid of judging the actions of another!—But pray, Madam, proceed.

WHEN Mr. Smith firſt came in with your couſin, continued ſhe, I was ſo happy as not to be obſerved; therefore, the moment I ſaw him, and heard his voice, I hurried out of the room, and afterwards took all imaginable precaution to avoid his ſeeing me. The laſt time he was here, I heard him in the hall. He was taking his leave, you were with him, and called me—I trembled, but, ſoon recovering myſelf, ſlipped out of the back-door unnoticed: when having taken a turn or two in the garden, I reſolved to go into the wood, imagining that I might there, without danger of diſcovery, watch the moment of his departure: but the trees prevented me. I then attempted to croſs the avenue, at ſome diſtance from the houſe; and ſetting off very ſwiftly, ran againſt him with all my force. I ſtaggered backwards, and recovered myſelf, juſt as he turned about, and looked full in my face. I was ſtruck with confuſion—Miſs Dorothea! he cry'd; and, in a moment, as if recollecting himſelf, I heard him add, as I flew before him to the other ſide, I muſt be deceived! it can never be Dorothea! I could hear no more. I fancied he followed me.—Methought I heard the leaves ruſtle behind me. I did not ſtop till I was out of breath. My mind

was

was agitated with my fears. The method I had taken to prevent a diſcovery, proved the very means of making myſelf known. I ſtood ſtill—I liſtened. All was quiet. I reflected on what had paſſed, when changing my purpoſe, I reſolved to ſtep back, to call him aſide from your couſin, and by an ingenuous confeſſion of the whole affair, to prevail upon him to keep my retreat a ſecret from my father: but in this flutter of ſpirits, ſo long was I in forming my reſolution, and ſo many thoughts occurred both for and againſt my putting it in practice, that when I returned to the place, Mr. Smith and your couſin were almoſt out of ſight. Strange caprice of the mind! notwithſtanding the affright and eager haſte with which I ran from him; ſlowly as I had moved to find him, and in ſpite of all the reluctance I felt in forcing myſelf to take this ſtep, I now looked upon his being gone as the greateſt misfortune. I burſt into tears, and———

SHE was here interrupted by Lucius, who, coming into the room, told me that Mr. Smith was already returned, in company with an elderly gentleman, to pay us the viſit he had promiſed at parting, and deſiring that I would make haſte to receive them, retired.

POOR Dorothea, who had revived every uneaſy thought, by the confidence ſhe had been placing in me, while thus unburthening her mind, was now, to all appearance, in a very unhappy ſituation. Her eyes were moiſtened with tears, when Lucius appeared, and gave a ſhock to her mind, by letting her know that this formidable Mr. Smith was returned, with a gentleman, whom ſhe immediately concluded to be her father, the perſon ſhe dreaded moſt to ſee. Lucius was no ſooner gone, than I beheld her ſunk back in her chair: her eyes were half-cloſed, and her countenance expreſſive of the moſt lively diſtreſs. Struck with ſurprize I ran to her relief, and endeavoured to rouſe her from this ſituation, by aſſuring her, that if ſhe pleaſed, ſhe ſhould not ſee Mr. Smith; but ſhe interrupted me, by crying, O my father!—my father is in the houſe! I tried every method to comfort her, and, at laſt, after giving her the ſtrongeſt aſſurances that I would uſe every argument to excuſe and juſtify her, ſhe began to moderate her uneaſineſs.

I THEN left her, full of the thoughts of vindicating her to the utmoſt of my power; when, as I went through the paſſage, I found that ſhe was not miſtaken in her conjectures,

for

for, before I entered the room, I heard a voice cry, Believe me, Sir, I know enough of them, and their prieſts too: and damn her, if ſhe had as much regard for her own ſalvation as I have for her——Here I opened the door, and, by my entrance, cut ſhort this fine expreſſion of his pious concern for the future welfare of his daughter. They roſe up, and after the uſual compliments, reſumed their ſeats, when Mr. Smith, giving me much the ſame account of his meeting with Dorothea, that ſhe herſelf had juſt before done, let us know, that the improbability of its being really that lady, in ſuch a dreſs, and ſo far from home, made him imagine that he muſt have been miſtaken; but the circumſtance was ſo remarkable, that, when he arrived at his father's, he could no more help mentioning it to him, than he could the pleaſure he had received from the converſation of a gentleman, that I was very well acquainted with, and whom he was proud to call his friend. Lucius, and I, ſmiled at this compliment, but as neither of us interrupted him, he proceeded to inform us, that his father, after aſking him abundance of queſtions about her, to which he could give no ſatisfactory anſwer, at laſt told him, that ſhe had left her father's houſe,

and had been miſſing near ſix months, and that he could do no leſs, than communicate what he heard to the perſon moſt concerned to know the place of her retirement. A letter was accordingly ſent to Dorothea's father, who came to learn the particulars from the young gentleman himſelf; and he being deſirous to ſee Mr. Manly again, propoſed to conduct him to us. He concluded, with letting us know, that he was very glad ſhe had been ſo wiſe, as to chuſe ſo honourable a retreat.

WHILE we were at breakfaſt, the ſtranger gave us an account of his marriage with Dorothea's mother, related many family broils, that happened on the ſcore of religion, and politics; complained of the diſturbance he had met with from prieſts; that they had ſpoiled the beſt woman in the world, and robbed him of his daughter, by perſuading the ſaucy baggage to run away from him. From thence, he digreſſed to popiſh tyranny, to maſſacres, and the tortures of inquiſitions: talked in favour of charity, with the rage of a bigot; reproached the papiſts for the want of it; and with all the intemperate heat, and enthuſiaſm of party, ſwore that, if he had the power, he would not leave one of the bloody-minded monſters alive.

I WAS both ſurprized and ſhocked, and could not help replying, with a ſneer, that he muſt certainly be a very great enemy to perſecution, ſince he could take ſuch a generous method of ſhewing his love to mankind. To this he was going to reply, when Mr. Smith very reſpectfully put him in mind of his daughter, and ſeveral of his late wife's relations.

HE immediately took the hint, and acknowledged, that he had gone too far. Said, that he loved his daughter better than ſhe deſerved: and having given her abundance of foul names, and nearly as many tender ones, as his reſentment, or his affection, had the predominancy, ſtrenuouſly deſired to ſee the ſaucy obſtinate vagabond.

I DON'T know, Madam, what idea you will form of the character of this gentleman. A man of diſſolute morals, ſtanding up for the cauſe of religion and truth. He ſwore and preached in a breath, and uttered his ſentiments with the poſitive aſſurance of a jeſuit. His words were dictated by his paſſions, which hurried him away with too muth violence to ſuffer him to be guided by the calmer dictates of reaſon. And, indeed, ſo difficult was it to judge of his real character, that it was ſome time before I knew whether I ought to

rank him amongſt men of ſenſe, or perfect brutes; though I was rather inclined to place him among the latter. But I was miſtaken: he was really poſſeſſed of many amiable qualities, joined to a tolerable ſhare of ſenſe, which lay in a manner dormant till the heat of his paſſion had ſubſided.

As ſoon as he was ſilent, I let him know that he ſhould ſpeedily ſee his daughter; but that I thought it neceſſary to prepare both him and her for the interview. I then, without ceremony, began her hiſtory from the time I firſt knew her, related every circumſtance of her behaviour, that could contribute to ſet her character in a fair light; deſcribed the ſevere treatment ſhe had met with, and concluded, with relating what had paſſed that morning, and the condition in which I had left her. I called her my friend, I reproached him, for endeavouring to enſlave her conſcience, and mingled theſe reproaches with more bitter ones on myſelf, for my unjuſt ſuſpicions. When I began to ſpeak, I reſolved to plead her cauſe, with all the art I was miſtreſs of: but, carried away by the importance of the occaſion, I ſoon loſt ſight of art. I ſpoke with the fervour of friendſhip, and while I was deſcribing the ſcene of her diſ-

diſtreſs, which our raſh folly had involved her in, a guſh of involuntary tears, which ſeemed to flow from my repentance, and his inſenſibility, raiſed the father in him to ſuch a degree, as ſeemed to render it difficult for him to contain himſelf.

HE could not now be kept from Dorothea. He confeſſed, that he had been more to blame than he had ever imagined: he would ſee his poor girl immediately. He loved her better than ever he did. And did ſhe, cry'd he, behave ſo prudently? Did ſhe ſay, ſhe felt ſuch tenderneſs for me?——Did ſhe not rather tell you, I am a paſſionate old fool? Well, ſhe is a good girl: and I am glad I have found her. Let me ſee her, Madam, let me ſee her, added he. I will ſee my poor dear daughter inſtantly.

HE was now in a ſituation that gave me the higheſt joy. I inſtantly aroſe, and ran up ſtairs. She was ſitting in a melancholy, thoughtful poſture, and, as ſoon as I entered the room, gave me a look that, at once, expreſſed her fear and impatience; but her countenance began to brighten into chearfulneſs, even before I had time to ſpeak. She ran towards me, to embrace me, while I had only time to cry, Victory! my dear Dorothea,

vic-

victory! I have conquered. I ſee it, Madam, ſaid ſhe, but how? by what means?—I have now no time to anſwer you, cry'd I, your father waits for you: he is ſubdued, he is ſoftened, he longs to ſee you. Here, I took hold of her hand, and led her down, her colour changing at every ſtep. When we entered the room, her father ran to her, claſped her in his arms, and laviſhed upon her the moſt endearing expreſſions of kindneſs. It was purely the joy of a father, who had recovered a dearly beloved child, after it had been, by ſome accident, loſt, without the leaſt mixture of reproach, or bitterneſs. Dorothea was ſilent for ſome time, and only expreſſed her joy by her tears: but, at laſt, preſſing his hand, Do you, do you, dear Sir, forgive me? cried ſhe. He gave her the warmeſt aſſurances that he did, embraced her again, took his chair, and made her ſit by him.

IT is eaſy to conceive, Madam, that Lucius, and I, muſt have great delight in obſerving the happineſs, to which we had ſo greatly contributed. For my part, I received many very engaging compliments from both father and daughter, with which Lucius ſeemed more

more pleaſed, than if they had been paid to himſelf.

Mr. Smith, I had obſerved, was extremely attentive to the praiſes I had beſtowed on Dorothea; he was greatly affected with her ſtory; and, for the reſt of the day, ſeemed to bear an uncommon ſhare in the happy reconciliation. He obſerved all her motions, and methought there was ſomething in his air, that expreſſed as much of the lover as the friend. For her part, ſhe viewed him without terror: he was no longer the formidable man, that had filled her with ſuch dreadful apprehenſions; and ſo far from having any inclination to run away, ſhe converſed with him, with all the freedom of an old acquaintance.

I AM ſtrangely addicted to the writing of long letters, which, I am afraid, tire you; and for the future, I believe, I muſt be leſs communicative, in order to be leſs troubleſome. Be pleaſed to preſent my compliments to his lordſhip, and be aſſured, that, whether my letters are long or ſhort, I ſhall always be, as I am at preſent,

your ſincere,

and moſt affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR rallying, ſo agreably, an aſſertion in one of my former letters, that rural ſcenes are the moſt unfruitful of adventures, has ſo much the air of a compliment, that, however undeſerved, I think I ought to thank you for it. You may conſider Dorothea's ſtory in what light you pleaſe; the intereſt you are pleaſed to take in her good or bad fortune, ought to induce me to ſend you the particulars, which are ſtill behind. Without any further preamble, therefore, I proceed.

BELIEVE, me, Madam, there is as great a difference between Dorothea's father, when angry, and when pleaſed, as between any two perſons upon earth; you would not even take him to be the ſame man; were it poſſible for you to have been an hour or two in his company, after his reconciliation, even you muſt have thought my laſt letter a vile ſlander on his character. So much do theſe furious paſſions diſtort the mind!

THE reſt of the day was ſpent very agreably, and, at the ſame time, nothing was omitted

mitted, that could contribute to confirm the happineſs of the amiable Dorothea. Lucius artfully introduced the ſubject of religious liberty, which he proved to be the birthright of every reaſonable being. He made uſe of the moſt convincing arguments. He quoted the incomparable Mr. Locke's piece * on this ſubject; a work, which he aſſured us, was of more value than a Peruvian mine. A high price I muſt confeſs. Mr. Smith joined with Lucius to anſwer ſome objections. He then repreſented perſecution as arraigning the infinite ſagacity of the ſovereign creator of all things, who, to make room for heaven-born charity, had wiſely given ſuch a variety of taſtes, degrees of capacity and underſtanding, to the mind of man, from whence reſult the love of truth, and the teſt of every kind and benevolent affection. Uniformity of ſentiment, Madam, is, I find, in his opinion, no more deſirable, than the dull uniform proſpect of a ſmooth, and wide-ſtretched, plain; or rather a large tract of barren ſand, where no interrupting ſhades, none of the blooming beauties, that ariſe from the varied tints of trees, of ſhrubs, of turfs, of flowers, diverſify the enlivening proſpect: whilſt charity, amidſt

* Letter on Toleration.

amidſt the greateſt variety of tempers, educations, and capacities, like the invigorating power of the ſun, preſents the moſt lovely ſcene, and gives life, and ſpirit, and beauty, to all around: mutual complacency, and benevolence, breathe an eternal ſpring, and, at once, bloſſom, bear fruit, and yield a friendly ſhade.

METHINKS I hear him ſtill, and ſtill ſee the blaze of humanity darting from his eyes; when he added, With this view, do I look upon my native country, the ſeat of liberty, and her ſiſter's earthly throne. In this view let us regard the whole world. The honeſt Turk ſhall be my friend, the ſober faithful Chineſe, that lays the divine Confucius to his heart, and the Indian of either world, bleſt with ſimple innocence, and native truth, ſhall be my brothers. Wherever I find a man who loves his God, and loves mankind, I will hug him to my breaſt.

HERE Lucius pauſed a while, and then, ſmiling, aſked Dorothea, what ſhe thought of this rant. Am I not, Madam, ſaid he, in the right; is not this a very deſirable diſpoſition of mind? She gave her approbation, on which he replied, Then what muſt you think of Popery, with her ſmooth uniformity of barren ſands,

ſands, which, blown with the baleful wind of perſecution, ariſe in curling torrents, and ſpread ruin, and deſtruction, over all the wide creation. Nor can the ſtorm be laid, till ſhowers of blood, pouring from honeſt hearts, beat down the duſt, and, for a time, huſh the wild uproar to a calm.

FORGIVE me, Madam, added Lucius, ſeeing her bite her lips, I do but juſt touch on a ſubject, which, if dreſſed in plainer language, would, I am ſure, wound your tender heart. Perſecution, whether in Papiſt or Proteſtant, is a tempeſt raiſed by the breath of hell. And, believe me, if there can be a Chriſtian without humanity and charity, a Devil may be a Saint.

MR. SMITH, who appeared not a little delighted with Lucius's flights, and who, doubtleſs, comprehended his motive for introducing this ſubject, took care to keep it up for ſome time longer. He entered upon the cauſe of liberty as connected with a free enquiry, and ſhewed the neceſſity of making uſe of reaſon, in order to diſcover truth from error. He was ſeconded by Dorothea's father, and Lucius cloſed their obſervations, by giving a ſlight glance at the principal ſyſtems of religion, throughout the world. The various pretences to infallibility

fallibility were conſidered and expoſed in all the folly of ſuffering the conſcience to be enſlaved, by the Derviſe, or the Chriſtian prieſt, proved equally ridiculous; and the impoſſibility of diſcovering truth from error, where no enquiry was made, as great in the zealot of Rome and London, as in that of Turkey, or Siam.

THESE ſubjects, Madam, were managed with ſuch delicacy, that it was impoſſible, for even Dorothea, to be offended. She ſeemed to liſten with pleaſure: and, when it was done, ſaid, with a ſmile, that they had inſpired her with a love of truth, and that, though ſhe was very ſure ſhe ſhould be a Catholic as long as ſhe lived, yet, for the future, ſhe would be one upon rational principles, and boldly venture to ſtudy the truth of her religion, and to read even thoſe pieces, with care, that had been wrote againſt it.

MR. SMITH received this declaration with as great an appearance of pleaſure, as even her father himſelf:—and nothing was omitted that could confirm this agreable diſpoſition.

YOU perceive, I dare ſay, the tedious dulneſs into which I am ſinking. My ſpirits, indeed, begin to flag. I will, therefore, haſten to a con-

concluſion, leſt a more intereſting ſubject ſhould intervene, and demand my pen.

THE reſt of our converſation was little more than chit chat. Dorothea had many queſtions to aſk, concerning her friends in the country, ſome of whom were dead, and ſome were married; and theſe, though they furniſhed not the leaſt kind of amuſement to us, as their very names were unknown, engaged almoſt her whole atttention for the little time ſhe had to ſtay.

THE next morning, I had the mortification of taking leave of Dorothea, whoſe father would not be prevailed upon to ſtay any longer. We parted with many reciprocal expreſſions of affection. But, to the no ſmall ſurprize of Lucius, Mr. Smith, who, at their firſt meeting, of his own accord, had propoſed to ſtay with us, at leaſt, a week, reſolved to accompany them, nor could we, by all the arguments in our power, induce him to keep his word.

I HAVE only one word more to add: yeſterday it was a month ſince they left us, and we have, this minute, received a letter from Mr. Smith, in which he informs us, that what ſeverity and reſtraint could not do, mildneſs and freedom have accompliſhed; that the amiable

able Dorothea is already a Proteſtant, and that he hopes for the happineſs of ſpeedily poſſeſſing the lovely convert.

IT is with great difficulty that I have been able to write thus far; I am really very ill, but as much as ever

YOUR LADYSHIPS's
affectionate
FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLIV.

I HAVE now, Madam, the pleaſure of informing you, that we have another perſon added to the family; you, I am ſure, will be glad to find that I am able to tell you ſo. I am now a mother, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, and was happily brought to bed three weeks ago.

O MY friend! how delightfully does the mind glow with gratitude, thus riſing from the ſtruggle of convulſive pangs, from the languor of expiring life! The dear helpleſs infant too, the ſubject of our future care, and future joy! With what new, what tender ſenſations, do we view the little gift of nature, entruſted to our protection! Methought a beam

beam of heavenly comfort ſhot thro' my ſoul! eaſe, joy—tranſporting joy, and mingled fondneſs: all delight, extaſy, and love! My heart overflowed at once with gratitude, and the ſofteſt maternal affection.

BEFORE the firſt week was over, I began to be alarmed, leſt my fondneſs for my dear little boy, ſhould make me forget my affection for my girl. I told my fears to Marilla, who was conſtantly with me, and deſired that I might have her brought to me every day: and while I endeavour to divide my heart between them both, the pretty creature, by twenty winning ways, ſeems to ſtrive to hold faſt my affections.——My fears, Madam, were groundleſs, I muſt love her: and I am really glad that my affections ſo eaſily correſpond with my duty.

AFTER this rambling incoherent letter, you will not wonder, if I tell you that, though I am as well as can be expected, my head is ſtill very weak: indeed my eyes fail me, and I am forced to conclude. May every bleſſing attend you.

I am,

Yours, &c.

FELICIA MANLY.

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LETTER XLV.

DEAR MADAM,

IT was with extreme concern that I read your laſt letter. Indeed, I ſincerely ſympathize in your affliction. I don't wonder that the ſudden death of a perſon, ſo dear to you as his lordſhip was, ſhould damp all your ſpirits, and make the moſt ſprightly pen that ever wrote, deal in the moſt ſolemn and awful truths. Sickneſs, pain, and death, have, indeed, a natural tendency to check the ſallies of a gay diſpoſition; to call back the thoughts from the pleaſurable amuſements, the vain purſuits of life, and, for a while, to confine them to the more important review of our own conduct: they are bitter medicines, but ſuch as have the moſt healing virtues—virtues adapted to ſtrengthen, improve, and exalt the mind. To be forced to take a final leave of that form we love; to bid a long adieu to the ſpirit, with whom we have daily converſed with pleaſing intercourſe—is very hard; the ſenſible heart-ſtrings muſt feel the dreadful rent, the diſtreſsful mind is torn with anguiſh. But, O Madam, why do you ſay *for ever?*—— The ſeparation is not ſurely for ever—ſoon you will

ſee

ſee him in a more lovely form. Soon the well known mind, cloathed with heavenly radiance, will congratulate your arrival on the bliſsful ſhore.—Why do you complain that "he is now a ſenſeleſs lump of clay?" Miſtake not the object of your affection, he is all life, and active ſpirit. Thoſe ſhining virtues that, while you enumerate them, ſeem to add to your grief, and which, you tell me, will ever renew your ſorrow, ought to be the pleaſing ſource of joy. Though you lament his loſs, lament not his exaltation, nor derive your tears from the very ſubject of his felicity. He is in the land of virtue; its native clime. How often do you repeat the words *poor dear man*, and dwell on ſounds expreſſive only of pity! Pity, Madam, is not for angels. It is you alone who is the ſufferer. O could you but be ſenſible of his happineſs, extaſy and tranſporting rapture would dry up your tears. Would you wiſh him back? Would you have him, to pleaſe you, leave the ſeats of bliſs, and exchange the regions of unfading felicity, for a world of ſin, tranſient happineſs, intermingled with pain and trouble? No; this you cannot wiſh. "But he was happy too ſoon"—Too ſoon his pain and ſorrow, and dangerous ſtate of trial, were at an end. You would have

prolonged his misery. If this be love, what is hatred?

O MY dear friend! recollect your self, and, fill'd with a generous and refined devotion, repose your mind on God; endeavour to lose the sense of your own private apparent loss, in the delightful contemplation of his transcendent goodness. Repose yourself on his sovereign will, whose determinations are always safest, wisest, best. Let every dewy tear be wiped away, by the happiness of him you love. Love him still, but be disinterested in your affection; imitate and rejoice in his virtues; and while you dwell with pleasure on his felicity, anticipate your own.

Death's but a path that must be trod,
If man would ever pass to God;
A port of calms, a state of ease,
From the rough rage of swelling seas.
Nor can the parted body know,
Nor wants the soul these forms of woe.
As men who long in prison dwell,
With lamps that glitter round the cell,
Whene'r their suff'ring years are run,
Spring forth to greet the glitt'ring sun:
Such joys, though far transcending sense,
Have pious souls at parting hence.

On

On earth, and in the body plac'd,
A few and evil years they waſte:
But when their chains are caſt aſide,
See the gay ſcene unfolding wide,
Clap the glad wing, and tow'r away,
And mingle with the blaze of day.

PARNELL.

WITH the moſt tender ſympathy and commiſeration, believe me to be,

dear Madam,

YOUR LADYSHIP'S
moſt affectionate friend,
FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLVI.

DEAR MADAM,

HOW great is the power of friendſhip! With one daſh of your pen you involve me in grief, and oblige me, by an irreſiſtible force, to taſte the bitterneſs of your ſorrow: with the next you inſpire me with ten thouſand ſenſations, all of them agreeable, al delightful. Nothing in the world, Madam, could give Lucius and me greater pleaſure,

than your propoſal to honour us with your company—Honour do I ſay? my friendſhip is offended at the compliment, and would let you known that vanity has no ſhare in our ſatisfaction. We heartily embrace your offer, and nothing ſhall be wanting, on our part, to make your reſidence with us perfectly happy.

BUT have you, indeed, the reſolution to leave the delights of the gay circle, the glittering ſplendor of conſpicuous greatneſs? Can you really have the courage to bid adieu to pomp, and all the parade of oſtentation and vanity, the dear delight of a thouſand fine ladies, and, in their opinion, the ſummit of all human happineſs? Can you forſake the reſidence of polite flattery and compliment, to dwell with ſimple truth, and ſincere friendſhip? and the important hurry of attending on the modes and forms of greatneſs, for perfect liberty, and a life gliding on in the clear ſmooth ſtream of rural peace?

O MADAM! how many delightful ideas ruſh upon my mind, upon the proſpect of ſuch an addition to our little friendly circle? Your enlivening wit, tempered with ſober contemplation, will heighten all the other bleſſings I enjoy. Ever ſince I have received your letter—the moſt welcome letter I ever receiv-

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ed—my imagination has been filled with the moſt pleaſing images, nor can I divert it from the flattering ſubject. I have already rambled with you, in idea, along my moſt favourite walks, and have ſallied out with you to taſte the fragrant breath of the morning.—But whither does my roving fancy carry me?—I beg pardon, Madam, for thus amuſing you with idle viſions; but friendſhip would have it ſo, and I only obeyed its dictates.

WE had, yeſterday, a piece of news that ſtruck us with an uncommon ſurpriſe. My father, Mr. Manly I mean, received a letter from Holland, which informed him, that his brother, who had parted from him in diſguſt about twenty years ago, and who had never ſeen him ſince, was dead, and had left him, in money and effects, to the value of forty thouſand pounds.

LUCIUS and I happened to be preſent at the receipt of this letter, which immediately opened a very affecting ſcene. It was read by my father, with a compoſure of countenance, which would not even ſuffer us to gueſs at the contents. He had no ſooner run it over, than giving Sophronia a moſt affectionate look, My dear, ſaid he, you have been a witneſs of my extravagance and folly, and it is now in

my power to let you ſee that my repentance is ſincere, and that no change of fortune can make me relapſe into the wild purſuits of vice. It is only ſince my diſtreſſes that I have known what it is to live: ſince that time my happineſs has been centered in you, and my family: to make you happy forms the moſt pleaſing part of my life, and it will ever do ſo. This alone deſerves the name of life. O my dear, your virtues have fixed me yours for ever. I here find that my brother is dead. I thought he had been long dead. He died a bachelor, and has left me all his effects. Had this happened ſome years ago, I had been ſtill, what I now bluſh to think that I ever was. Here the tears ſtood in his eyes. He was ſtanding, and my mother was ſeated before him. His looks and expreſſions, joined to her ſurprize, had hitherto kept her motionleſs; but ſhe was now unable to contain herſelf any longer; ſhe ſuddenly aroſe, and threw her arms about his neck. He embraced her—he preſſed her to his heart, crying, No, my Sophronia, my vices ſhall never more diſturb the quiet of this dear breaſt. She begged him not to mention the name of vice: told him that his affection was all that was neceſſary to make her happy; that that was wealth

enough

enough, and of more importance to her, than all the riches in the world: and that with ſuch a huſband, and ſuch children, ſhe had, for a good while paſt, thought herſelf the happieſt woman in England.

AT the word *children*, ſhe caſt an affectionate look at Lucius, Marilla, and me. At leaſt my heart was willing to rank me among the number of thoſe, from whoſe tenderneſs ſhe derived ſo much of her ſatisfaction. But the moment ſhe obſerved me, ſhe withdrew her arms, and ſeeming to ſtruggle with her tenderneſs, ſtepped back, and again ſeated herſelf in her chair.

MY father, at the ſame time, turned to Lucius and Marilla, called them his dear, his virtuous children, and Lucius, in particular, his benefactor and his friend, and added ſomething about gratitude, which Lucius could not ſuffer. Dear Sir, ſaid he, forbear theſe moving expreſſions of your goodneſs. For heaven's ſake talk not of gratitude to me. What muſt I be, if I could hear, with patience, ſuch language from a father—a tender, and affectionate father. I know you love me; then why do you make uſe of words that ſhock my love to you, and which both nature and duty forbid my hearing?

MY father made no reply, but ſaluted Marilla and me; and, after giving me ſome particular expreſſions of affection, we all took our ſeats, when giving the letter to Lucius, he deſired him to read it, which he had no ſooner done, than the converſation turned upon the particulars.

ONE who reflects on the misfortunes of this family, would be apt to conceive, that ſuch a ſudden and unexpected change in their ſituation, muſt have occaſioned the moſt extravagant tranſports of joy; and, if he had only a ſuperficial knowledge of human nature, that my father's behaviour was extremely unnatural. Marilla's eyes, indeed, ſparkled with a peculiar pleaſure: and I could not help expreſſing a lively ſatisfaction, from conſidering that Lucius would now gain from his father an equivalent to what he had acquired from mine: and thus, being placed more upon a level, as to circumſtances, approve my father's conduct, to the moſt avaricious of his friends. The day was ſpent with rather more gravity than uſual. But the want of mirth was ſupplied by the ſweet complacency of friendly hearts, exulting with exquiſite joy in the happineſs of each other; while the compoſure and equanimity of mind, which appeared in thoſe moſt

moſt concerned, ſtill heightened the opinion I had conceived of their characters.

I OUGHT, Madam, to have told you, that the occaſion of our viſit at my father's, was to ſee our daughter; the dear ſweet creature is very much indiſpoſed, and the doctor informs us, that her diſorder will end in the ſmall-pox.

LET me ſpeedily know, how long it will be, before I ſhall have the pleaſure of telling you, in perſon, how much I am

your affectionate friend

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLVII.

DEAR MADAM,

HOW are the ſweets of life intermingled with bitterneſs! My poor dear girl has now left the world, and gone to the regions of ſpotleſs innocence and peace. I had almoſt ſaid, that innocence itſelf is dead, and fled to its native ſkies—my little ſon occurs to my thoughts, and I retract the expreſſion. That opening mind, which every day received new ideas, now feels the full blaze of truth, and, perhaps, would look, with contempt, on the boaſted knowledge of mortals. Her pretty laugh, the innocent liſp of her half-form'd

ſentences, when, with little ſportive arts, ſhe ſtrove to court my ſmiles, are ever loſt to me.

Oh, why did I let her take ſuch hold of my heart! How vain were my fears, leſt I ſhould not love her as I ought! But yet, methinks, had I loved her leſs—I cannot think of that neither—I would not love her leſs. But ſhe is happy, pretty lovely cherub! ſhe is happy; for ever free from vice, from care, and pain, and ſorrow.

SHE was ſeized with the ſmall pox, as the phyſician had foretold; a painful, and a loathſome diſeaſe! My affection, and the ſenſe of my duty, compelled me to ſee her—I ſaw her every day. But, O Madam! how was the ſenſe of her loſs ſwallowed up, by my ſollicitude for my ſon, who was ſeized with the ſame diſtemper about twenty-four hours before ſhe died. O my heart! what did I feel! I blamed my raſhneſs—and, as if my duty and affection had been a crime, reproached myſelf for what deſerved no reproach. With a noble fortitude, Lucius endeavoured to chear my ſpirits, and to raiſe my hopes. He talked of reſignation, and of providence; and felt himſelf the reſignation he would inſpire. At firſt the taſk was hard, but ſoon the healing balm ran through my ſoul—he ended, and all within

within was peace. Every favourable ſymptom ſoon appeared, and with them ſoothing hope. In ſhort, he grew paſt danger—he recovered, and my grief was loſt in joy.

IN my preſent ſituation, while I conſider together the loſs of a child, that I loved almoſt as much as if nature had bid me love, and the recovery of another, whom maternal affection had intwined about my heart, my mind enjoys all the united force of ſerenity, reſignation, and thankfulneſs. I conſider my dear infant, as left below for future uſefulneſs, to be the delight of his family, and a bleſſing to mankind; ſpared, that he may riſe to high attainments in virtue, to perpetuate his name, and the benevolence that glows in his father's breaſt, when his father, and your Felicia, ſhall be here no more; and, in ſhort, as ſpared to give him room to obtain thoſe more glorious, more exquiſite, more refined delights, in the world of bliſs, to which the negative goodneſs of helpleſs infancy can hardly be ſuppoſed to be entitled.

YOU ſee, Madam, that, in this plan, I have left titles, grandeur, and ſhining poſts of honour, to be ſtruggled for by the buſy world. May virtue be the glory of my ſon, I am anxious for no other dignities; may the doing

good be his employment, his poſt of honour. O call not this humility, it is a pride of the nobleſt kind. Theſe are the flattering hopes that ſwell a mother's breaſt, and may they be the preſage of bleſſings, ſtretched out to the fartheſt limits of time; while a MANLY, with all the virtues of my Lucius, ſhall in ſucceſſion ariſe in every age, with calm benevolence to meditate on happineſs, and diffuſe its influence all around. O how my heart beats with the great idea!—My child is this moment brought to me: with what elevated tenderneſs do I look upon him! I give him the breaſt he longs for, I preſs him to my boſom, and write again.

MAY theſe lips, that now draw thy ſuſtenance from me, be ever the fountain of truth, ever pure in their expreſſions, and ſtrangers to the wanton's kiſs: may the joys of innocence, and as much peace as mortals can know, always dwell within this little heart: and when this heart ſhall melt with ſoftneſs for ſome lovely maid, may ſhe return, with purity, thy flame, and render all thy happineſs compleat!—Bleſs me! what nonſenſe I am writing, with my child in my lap! But I attempt, in vain, to loſe ſight of the ſubject, and, I hope, the candour

dour of friendſhip will bear with the workings of maternal affection.

LUCIUS is now engaged in an employment, that you will doubtleſs imagine to be extremely viſionary. He is ſtudying the hiſtory of man, from his moſt early infancy. And as his ſon is much too young to expreſs his ideas in any other way, but by the traces of his countenance, and by inarticulate ſounds, he examines theſe with a particular attention, in order to diſcover the ſtrength of his perceptions, and the progreſs of his ideas. This employment is extremely ſuitable to his philoſophic turn of mind. Though I muſt confeſs, that it ſometimes makes me laugh, to ſee the aſſiduous care with which he endeavours to trace the impreſſions made on the little features of a face, which nature has ſcarcely finiſhed, but which, however, ſufficiently deſcribe wonder, pleaſure, and pain. From this ſtudy Lucius propoſes to derive the greateſt advantages: he will have an early knowledge of a heart, in the happineſs of which he is moſt nearly concerned; and by this diſcover the degrees and bent of the paſſions, the ſtrength of the moral taſte, and determine, with the greateſt evidence, this important truth, whether there are

any

any ſeeds of vice implanted in the heart *. A doctrine contended for by many learned and good men, with as much heat and zeal, as if vice was the higheſt glory and perfection of human nature.

So aſſiduous is he already in this taſk, that he has even interfered in my choice of a nurſery-maid, and prevailed upon me to make this office worth the attendance of a perſon of ſolidity and underſtanding, one of a tolerable education, and of a ſober reputable family. And this was the more neceſſary, as ſhe is oliged to deviate from the common practice, and to regulate her actions by his, or my directions, in the minuteſt particulars. He is ſuch a friend to nature, that he will not ſuffer her to be conſtrained; the body muſt not be bound up with rollers, nor ſmothered with the heat of flannel, be uſed with a miſtaken delicacy, and too cloſely preſerved from the inclemency of the weather. But I muſt not enter into particulars. Only this I ſhall ſay, that he is ſo unfaſhionably polite, as to conſider the

* The reader may find a conciſe and excellent hiſtory of the underſtanding, and the paſſions, in the Preceptor, Vol. II. Book i. Sect. 1. A performance that the editor fears to commend, leſt he ſhould injure it by his praiſe.

the mother's ſuckling her own child, as one of the indiſpenſible obligations of nature; as a duty that can never be transferred to another, except in a caſe of the utmoſt neceſſity: and, indeed, had I been as averſe to conviction upon this head, as the gay fine lady at court, I muſt have either renounced all pretenſions to reaſon, or ſuffered myſelf to own the force of his arguments.

But his firſt ſtudy is to cultivate the underſtanding, or, as Mr. Thompſon expreſſes it,

To teach the young idea how to ſhoot,

the nobleſt employment that can exerciſe the attention of a reaſonable being! an employment that, however, muſt, at preſent, be confined within a narrow compaſs; ſince, for ſome time, it can only conſiſt in preſerving the confuſed undiſtinguiſhing capacity of infancy from receiving bad impreſſions: and here the care ought, in his opinion, to begin with life itſelf. The tender brain muſt not be diſturbed, nor the mind, in its firſt exertions, be ſtarted by loud or ſudden noiſes. This care increaſes in proportion as the mind enlarges; and as it ſtill continues capable of receiving impreſſions from objects of terror, theſe muſt ſtill be induſtriouſly excluded. About a month ago,

when we were at my father's, Lucius was very much ruffled at finding his daughter afraid of the dark. He was certain that, pardon the impropriety of the expreſſion! an object that had ſo frequently occurred, and which muſt have been familiar to the child, could never excite ſuch fear, had not its mind been taught to connect with it ſome unnatural and terrifying ideas. This was, in the eſteem of Lucius, an affair of great importance: he ſearched into the cauſe, and found that one of the ſervants had frightened the pretty creature, with threats of Tom Dark, and other words, which to children are of direful ſound. Would you believe it, Madam? for this cauſe alone, he prevailed on his mother to turn away the poor girl. I confeſs that I was ſo ſtruck with this, that I could not forbear telling him, that I thought he behaved in a very arbitrary and cruel manner: when, in juſtification of his conduct, he ran to his ſiſter's cloſet, fetched a volume of the *Spectator*, and read, before all the ſervants, a performance on that very ſubject, that ſtruck me dumb. However, he had no objection to my providing for the girl, till I could get her another place: and, in return for this civility, ſhe has had the ingratitude, and the impudence, to raiſe a report, that Lu-

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cius had this child by me, before our marriage. But, in the country, no vice is indulg'd with ſuch a keen reliſh as ſlander.

LUCIUS has been very careful in his remarks on the ſeveral ways, by which the mind of infancy is induſtriouſly impreſſed with the moſt hateful extremes of all the paſſions *, ſelfiſhneſs, pride, revenge, inſolence, avarice, cruelty, and in ſhort all the vices which ſpring up in after life; when the mind is ruined, without deſign, and the heart in ſport taught to be vicious before the tongue can ſpeak, and all the tender ſenſibilities of humanity are utterly perverted. Againſt theſe methods of corruption he propoſes to be ever on his guard, becauſe traces ſo early made are ſeldom perfectly eraſed: and, indeed, this kind of treatment ought more to be avoided, as it is infinitely more fatal in its conſequences, than all the diſtempers that can affect the bodily health.

THIS, Madam, though of prodigious importance, is only a negative kind of education. But, to implant a love of truth, and a thirſt after knowledge, to teach the young underſtanding

* See ſome hints of theſe methods of corruption in the note to p. 40 and 41, Vol. I. which the reader may eaſily enlarge, from his own obſervations on the conduct of parents, nurſes, &c.

ing to exert its powers; to refine, to elevate, to enlarge the ideas, and to lead the eager admiring youth, by the ſweet allurements of pleaſure, to the higheſt attainments in virtue, to rectitude of manners, to rejoice early in his immortality, and to anticipate the divine delights of heaven, by a diſintereſted love for mankind; a love widely extended, and ever prompting to acts of beneficence and diffuſive goodneſs: this is an employment as noble, as the attainment is godlike, and to this does Lucius already raiſe his ideas; this he conſiders as the previous ſtudy, the earlieſt exerciſe of childhood. He propoſes to dreſs up morality, and the ſublimeſt truths of natural religion, in the eaſy * language of infancy, and by degrees to pour in more and more light as the underſtanding enlarges, and the mind grows more and more capacious; and by encouraging the reſtleſs curioſity natural to children, give inceſſant employment for the rational faculties. He conſiders Engliſh, as the moſt important of all the languages to an Engliſhman. His child, he ſays, ſhall ſtudy all its beauties, learn to read with a grace, and if poſſible to write with elegance, to adapt his

* Something of this kind is already attempted in the Chriſtmas Box, two ſmall volumes printed for the uſe of children.

his language to his ſentiments, and to expreſs his thoughts with eaſe and fluency; to form his ſtyle, and to ſettle his judgment, by a careful attention to the works of the moſt celebrated Engliſh authors; be taught to point out their beauties, to comment on the noble ſentiment, to reliſh, even to rapture, the tender beauties of Spencer, the lightning of Shakeſpeare, and the ſhining glory of Milton.

THE languages he conſiders only as the key to further knowledge, and not knowledge itſelf: theſe, even in the midſt of ſtudy, he would render ſubſervient to his grand deſign, and make the dry taſk of words delightful, by a continual acquiſition of agreeable ſenſations, and improved ideas. He would pleaſe himſelf with hearing the voice of unprejudiced nature, a mind unbiaſſed with the forms of thinking which prevail amongſt mankind, decide in what conſiſts the merit of ſuch and ſuch an action; he would hear the tongue of innocence explain the glory or infamy of an Alexander, a Trajan, or a Domitien; he would cheriſh and fix the juſt ſentiment, would improve the random thought, and, where the judgment failed, would ſet it right. How delightful muſt this exerciſe of the faculties be to a child! To be led by its own reflections to a con-

ſtant ſeries of new ideas—how manly, how rational the entertainment! It muſt inſpire the mind with a continual ſpring of ſelf-complacency, and make the moſt rugged ſteps to learning pleaſant. Lucius would endeavour to obtain the aſſiſtance of ſome decay'd gentleman, adorned, at once, with piety, good nature, learning, a knowledge of mankind, and a free and genteel addreſs. A perſon of this character muſt be the tutor of his ſon, and ſhare with him in the important taſk; he muſt live in the family, and in all reſpects be treated like a gentleman and a friend. Learning will thus be made a high entertainment, eſpecially as it will be varied, at proper intervals, by the hiſtory and conſtitution of our own country. Under their conduct, the aſpiring youth muſt improve in knowledge and underſtanding, muſt be introduced early into life, emboldened, encouraged to ſpeak, and to bear a part in the moſt polite converſation, at an age when learning generally conſiſts in mere ſounds, and pleaſure in vanity and folly: and, while a youth, we ſhall have the rational delight of ſeeing our child a man, a friend, a companion.

I AM prepared to hear you laugh at me, and expreſs your ſurpriſe, that, notwithſtanding

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the great uncertainty of life, I can thus launch into futurity; talk of embeliſhing a mind yet incapable of fixed ideas, and from an infant of two months old, by the ſtrength of imagination, draw a line parallel to that of time, and reckon our duration by that of the ſun and moon. But blame me as much as you pleaſe, ſome of the ſweeteſt comforts of life depend on expectation; and was it not for hope, which recreates the mind with diſtant proſpects of pleaſure, our very enjoyments would be apt to flatten, and life itſelf grow dull and inſipid. But it is not only a remedy for the vapours, and the moſt effectual cure for the reſtleſs mind; it is a cordial comfort to the diſtreſſed, and joy to the miſerable.

EDUCATION, Madam, is a daily topic of diſcourſe, a ſubject to us the moſt intereſting; can my friend then think it impertinent? But if it appear ſo now, as you will ſoon be a mother, you will ſoon be convinced of its importance. Lucius is now ſo fond of it, that he talks of little elſe; he is continually quoting to me the beſt authors on the ſubject, and from theſe I have collected my ideas, which, as they are ever preſent to my mind, I ſhould have found ſome difficulty to ſuppreſs.

HAS

HASTEN, dear Madam, by your preſence, the happineſs of

your affectionate

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLVIII.

HOW tedious is time, when his wings are loaded with expectation! My laſt, I imagined, would have concluded our epiſtolary correſpondence, at leaſt for ſome years. I propoſed to throw aſide my pen, to bid an eternal adieu to tedious narrations, high flights, rapturous nonſenſe, and long letters; but the very morning in which we were preparing to ſet out to meet you, with an alacrity inſpired by our joy, to be diſappointed with a fortnight's delay, what a damp did it give to my ſpirits! I could hardly meet with a greater diſappointment. Let me have no more of your letters, Madam, I beſeech you. A fortnight! fifteen days!—indeed it is quite intolerable.

WE have had a very diverting account from my ſiſter Marilla, of a moſt ſingular courtſhip. My wiſe couſin, it ſeems, has had the misfortune

fortune to fall deſperately in love with that engaging lady. The mighty wound was given at our houſe; but he had not there the power to make it known: he waited for a more favourable opportunity, which he had the penetration to foreſee might ſoon arrive: and, therefore, recommending himſelf as the beſt coachman in the univerſe, he earneſtly begged, that ſhe would do him the honour, to ſuffer him to drive her home in her chaiſe. She readily conſented to the propoſal, and he, perhaps, drawing a favourable concluſion from her eaſy compliance, was all life and thankfulneſs.

THEY accordingly mounted, and had drove but a ſmall diſtance from the houſe, when his natural ſelf-conceit proving too ſtrong for his baſhfulneſs, he could not reſiſt the preſent moment, and, accordingly, began with praiſing himſelf; a method of courtſhip, though a little uncommon, not altogether irrational: for as a perſon, deſirous to exchange a ſorry piece of goods for a better, ſhould prudently confine all his oratory to one ſide, ſo he imagined, that he ought to give her a high opinion of his own merit, and not, by encreaſing her vanity, by a miſapplied flattery, make the diſproportion greater than it really was. In conſequence of this refined ſophiſtry, and with the aſſiſt-

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ance of the phraſe, *though I ſay it that ſhould not ſay it*, which he introduced, at proper intervals, to ſhew his modeſty, he began a long detail of his uſeful travels; and very gallantly concluded with telling her, that though he had converſed with, and even had the honour to enjoy the good graces of the fineſt ladies in France and Italy, he was never made a captive to the little divinity till now.

MARILLA, who had been held a good while in ſuſpenſe, could not help being ſurprized at this declaration, which, however, ſhe was ſo cruel as to turn into ridicule. The gaity of her reply diſconcerted him for ſome moments: but recovering himſelf he anſwered very gravely, that he loved, and would for ever love her; and that, as it was not in her power to prevent it, ſhe ought to think of ſome way of making him happy, ſince that would be the ready way to make herſelf ſo. And that ſhe could never have a better huſband; ſince he would do all in his power to ſerve her.

HIS thoughts were ſo taken up with this anſwer, that, quite forgetful of his office, he drove againſt a tree, which unluckily grew by the ſide of the road, when the wheel breaking, poor Marilla was thrown in the dirt, while the ſquire, giving a ſpring, flounced into an

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adjacent ditch, which happened to be full of water. Marilla, who had not received the leaſt hurt, was preſently on her feet, extending her hand to the relief of the poor dripping ſquire, which by his touch was as defiled as his own. She found him ſhaking his ears, and, with a moſt diſtreſsful countenance, attempting to clamber up the bank. His hat and wig floated on the ſtream, his face was as much beſmeared as his cloaths, and his whole figure ſuch as would have excited laughter in any other perſon but herſelf; but to her it was only an object of pity.

THE ſervants, who were riding at ſome diſtance, no ſooner beheld his miſerable plight, than they made up to his aſſiſtance, and preſently ſet him on dry land. Having recovered his hat and wig, he began, with great confuſion, to make his apology, which ſhe interrupted, by deſiring him only to mind his own health, to take one of the horſes, and to ride with all the haſte he could to her father's, which was then not above half a mile diſtant, and, ordering her ſervants to bring home the chaiſe, promiſed to follow him on foot. My couſin readily obeyed, and Marilla, who walks much better than moſt ladies about St. James's, was not very long after him. She entered the houſe unperceived,

ceived, and having waſhed herſelf, and changed her cloaths, went down to the parlour, where ſhe found her lover ſitting, with my father, by a good fire: he had been accommodated with a large dram, as a preſervative from the effects of the cold, and care being taken to ſee him cleaned, and with freſh apparel put in a more comfortable plight, he was now in a proper ſituation to receive her.

WAS it poſſible for my poor couſin to begin his amour, under more unlucky auſpices! to be thus ſouſed, and, falling from his aſpiring hope, to become an object worthy of deriſion, rather than pity. What a painful humiliation! But, though I lament his fate, he had ſtill comforts, which the diffident and tender lover could never, on the like occaſion, have experienced: a hidden reſerve of vanity now ſtood his friend, and enabled him to bear up manfully under his diſgrace.

MARILLA had no ſooner opened the door than my couſin, who, having recollected, as he himſelf has ſince confeſſed, the obliging manner with which ſhe had endeavoured to help him out of the ditch, the little care ſhe took of herſelf, and her great concern for him, had not the leaſt doubt but that ſhe was perfectly in love with him, flew to her

her with open arms, gave her a rude kiſs, and, ſeizing hold of her hand, pulled her toward my father, who, as well as Marilla, was all amazement. My couſin deſired his fair-one not to be ſo coy; adding, that as he loved her, and ſhe loved him, their parents conſent was all that was neceſſary to their marriage; and then, addreſſing himſelf to my father, cried, with the ſame vivacity, Egad, Sir, you know my fortune, lookee, and ſo forth, and I hope you have no objection to my having the honour of being *votre petit-fils*. The honour of being my grandſon! cry'd my father, laughing; how is that? One language at a time, Sir, I beſeech you. I don't underſtand—— He was here interrupted by Marilla, who, recovering the uſe of her tongue, cry'd out, What do you mean, Sir, let go my hand—I can't comprehend what you would be at. I love you!—You!——What inſolence! And now, exerting all her ſtrength, ſhe gained her liberty, and, inſtantly, flung out of the room.

As ſoon as ſhe was gone, my father told him, very frankly, that he could not poſſibly account for this rude behaviour; and that, when he came to his houſe in ſuch a deplorable condition, he did not think it

was with deſign to affront his daughter, which, whatever were his motives, he would not ſuffer. My couſin aſſured him, with many oaths, that he was in earneſt, and that he only intended to aſk his conſent to marry his daughter, for that he had convincing proofs that ſhe loved him. My father anſwered, that he could never believe it; but that, if it was true, he had no objection to his family and fortune; and, therefore, inſiſted upon knowing, what reaſon he had to believe that ſhe had an affection for him. My couſin replied, with a confident laugh, that he knew well enough how to judge; and that a lady might tell ſhe loved, without making uſe of words; that if my father knew all, he would be of his mind; and that after what had paſſed, ſhe ought not to have given herſelf ſuch airs; but it was all one, he could be as indifferent as her. Marilla now returned, and interrupted a converſation that was growing very warm on my father's ſide.

As ſhe entered the room her young ſpark, reſolving to humble her, put on a look of inſenſibility, and walked by her with a careleſs, affected, and ſelf-ſatisfied air; but ſeeming not to obſerve it, ſhe ſeated herſelf cloſe by her father, and in a calm and complaiſant manner de-

deſired him to ſit down. He obey'd with a ſmile, when the old gentleman repeated his command to explain, before his daughter, what he meant by his inſinuations. But he did not chooſe to hear him; and leaning his elbow on his knee, and ſtaring up in Marilla's face, he aſked her which of thoſe pretty hands it was that he had the misfortune to daub, when ſhe was ſo kind as to ſtrive to help him out of the ditch. He then propoſed that ſhe ſhould hold it out to him, that he might kiſs it; called her a dear ſweet fond fool, ſwore ſhe could not help it; ſhe was frighted for him, and off her guard, or elſe it would have been imprudent to yield ſo ſoon; that ſome men would like her the worſe for it, but that he thought it a certain ſign that ſhe would make a good wife, ſince, though he was in fault, ſhe took more care of him than herſelf.

MARILLA, gueſſing the grounds of his behaviour, heard this arrogant ſpeech, without once attempting to interrupt him: but he had no ſooner concluded, than giving him a contemptuous look, I am ſorry, Sir, ſaid ſhe, that you ſhould put ſuch a falſe conſtruction upon my humanity. I thought your life, or, at leaſt, your health in danger; I followed the firſt dictates of pity, and, inſtead of diverting myſelf

with your misfortunes, endeavoured all I was able to remove them, and hurried you hither, where I knew you could be ſupplied with neceſſaries, till you received them from home. But ſuch is the return that the leaſt act of kindneſs meets with, from narrow and ſelfiſh minds. Yet, I aſſure you, Sir, I am not ſorry for the little I have done, with an intent to ſerve you: It ſpreads no bluſh on my cheek, it gives no uneaſineſs to my heart. There is not a creature living, that I would not have ſerved with equal tenderneſs. But how could your vanity ſuggeſt ſuch a motive for my endeavouring, without any hurt to myſelf, to ſerve the brother of Amelia, and a near relation to my ſiſter Felicia? What a wretched heart muſt you have, while you can form no idea of generoſity, humanity, or compaſſion, without the allay of a particular affection! I wiſh you well, I confeſs, and more ſo, as the happineſs of a worthy family, is, in ſome degree, connected with yours: but, at the ſame time, I muſt be ſo plain as to tell you, that I neither do, nor ever can love you. Your vices are an unſurmountable obſtacle. Your travels, which might have been of ſervice to a man of ſenſe and virtue, only ſerve to diſgrace you, and diſplay your ignorance and

folly.

folly. Forgive me, Sir, I mean not to reflect on any involuntary imperfection; were you as kind to yourſelf as nature has been, you would be much more tolerable. But your debauchery, your boaſted lewdneſs, and that impious cuſtom of ſwearing, the unmannerly vice of a bully, muſt for ever exclude you from the affection of any woman, who has ſenſe, virtue, or true delicacy. Indeed, Sir, if you would be happy here, you muſt endeavour, at leaſt, to copy your couſin Manly, and, like him, aſpire to be happy hereafter. He, I dare ſay, enjoys more true delight from the reflections of his own mind, in one day, than you, with your boaſted ſwing of pleaſure, in the compaſs of a year. Ay, than in the compaſs of an eternity, cried my father, with an eagerneſs which could ariſe from nothing but a conviction founded on experience: I know it, Sir, I feel it every day.

I BELIEVE, Madam, you will think Marilla's reproof much milder than my couſin's inſolence deſerved: ſhe had, indeed, a favourable opportunity to humble his pride, and, by opening his eyes to his own follies, to lay an obligation on his whole family: to this point then ſhe generouſly directed her views. Indeed, had ſhe not treated him with ſuch forci-

ble ſeverity, all ſhe could ſay would have been uſeleſs. His mind is ſo extremely callous, that fine raillery, though ever ſo ſharp, would not have hurt him.

THE youth, ſtruck with the eaſe of a conqueſt which he fancied he had too ſoon obtained, began already to think of my ſiſter with indifference. His elbow was ſtill on his knee, and his eyes, with the utmoſt confidence, fixed on hers: but ſhe had hardly uttered three or four ſentences, when ſurpriſe, vexation, and diſappointment, appeared by turns on the ſtiff muſcles of his unmeaning face, that was not at all formed to expreſs his ideas; and yet theſe were wrought up in ſo ſtrong a manner, as to give deformity to every feature: and at laſt, as if blaſted by the indignant look of virtue he ſighed, hung down his head, and ſat abaſhed and confounded.

THE bare idea of loſing, for ever, what he, juſt before, was ready to deſpiſe, made him almoſt diſtracted. His humility was now no leſs extravagant than his vanity before; it ſunk even into meanneſs, and the moſt abject ſubmiſſions; he roſe, walked about the room, ſat down again, wept, began to ſwear, and ſtopped ſhort before the execration was finiſhed, and, at laſt, after the ſolemneſt proteſtations,

ons, that he never loved her a hundredth part ſo well, as he did that moment, told her that he wiſhed from the bottom of his heart, that ſhe had not a farthing in the world, or (to uſe his own elegant phraſe) a ſmock to her back, that he might let her ſee his ſincerity.

MARILLA ſays, that it was impoſſible for her to avoid ſmiling, and inſtantly thanking him for his good wiſhes. As to my father, he burſt into laughter: a fine ſpeech truly! ſaid he; a moſt generous lover! ſo you would have her be a beggar, that you might force her to be miſerable your own way. We are all greatly obliged to you. My couſin endeavoured to vindicate himſelf, and after ſaying and unſaying, affirming and retracting, at laſt, with much heſitation and ſtammering, he made ſhift to declare, that he only meant to ſay, that he ſhould be glad of an opportunity to convince her how very much he loved her.

BUT, Madam, I try your patience too much, as well as tire myſelf, in thus dwelling on circumſtances that you may think beneath your notice. I ſhall only ſay, therefore, that by the time his ſervant had returned, with linen and other cloaths from my aunt's, he began to be more reconciled to his fate, and, after having dreſſed himſelf afreſh, took his

leave, with a tolerable grace. Not all the reaſoning in the world, could have made him ſo ſenſible of his folly, as this diſappointment has done. Love ſeems to have refined his mind, and to have given a larger ſcope to his underſtanding. He ſhuns his old companions, and, for the preſent, at leaſt, has thrown off his favourite vices. It has taught him the uſe of reflection; and, in ſhort, if this reformation continues, we may have the happineſs to ſee him have a juſt claim to that reſpectful complacency, which is ever due to the character of an honeſt man: a title the moſt ſignificant, as it carries in itſelf the idea of intrinſic worth and excellence.

AFTER all, a union between my couſin and Marilla would be extremely agreeable to me, could I be but once convinced of the ſincerity of his reformation; ſince it would not only give a cloſer cement to the two families, but might happily confirm that virtue, which has yet ſcarcely taken root.—But why do I mention this? it is a thing altogether impracticable: ſhe will not ſuffer me to ſpeak of it: his want of ſenſe is alone in her eſteem an unſurmountable obſtacle. The deficiency, ſhe ſays, is on the wrong ſide; and ſhe could never have a ſincere eſteem for a huſband, who was acknowledged by all her acquaintance to be greatly her in-

inferior. And, indeed, I muſt confeſs that I think her in the right.

LUCIUS and I propoſe to meet you at Leiceſter. I ſincerely wiſh you a ſafe and agreable journey, and am, as you will ever find me, when our friendſhip will be ſupported by a nearer intercourſe,

YOUR LADYSHIP'S
faithful friend,
FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLIX. *and laſt.*

From CHARLOTTE *to Lady* HARRIOT ***.

DEAR MADAM,

DID not I tell you, that I would not write till I could ſend you word how I liked my ſituation? Why then ſhould you complain that I have kept my word? I am in a new world, and three months is ſurely time little enough to form a judgment, where every thing I ſee, and every thing I hear is as great a novelty, as if I had been tranſported to ſome unknown region. Conceive, if you can, how ſurpriſing it muſt be to me, who never beheld any thing but the ſplendors, or, as I now chuſe to call them, the tedious ceremonies of

a court, to meet with artleſs ſimplicity and plain dreſſed truth, inſtead of polite flattery and high ſtrained compliment; and, in the room of every gaudy folly, to behold pure nature and white-robed innocence, and felicity ariſing from a ſtrict conformity to their dictates.—But, I believe, Madam, a particular account of my reception, and manner of life, will not be diſagreeable. To begin then.

As I intended to ſurpriſe them, by arriving an hour or two ſooner than they expected, I was not above five miles from the end of my journey, when I was met by Mr. Manly and my friend. We had like to have paſſed by each other, but Felicia, happily obſerving the coronets on my chariot, called me by my name. I gave them a look: their door flew open, and both Lucius and ſhe were at mine, before any of our fellows had time to diſmount. I was ſurpriſed, I confeſs, at this piece of indecorum: O the dear hoyden! cry'd I to myſelf, and the ſervants ſtared as if they were aſhamed of their inſignificancy. The eyes of both my friends ſparkled with pleaſure, their rapidity and eagerneſs ſoothed my friendſhip, while my heart fluttered and ſaid, To follow nature is the height of good breeding. One of my ſervants preſently opened the door

of

of the chariot, when I could do no leſs than ſtep out to embrace them. But I ſhall take no notice of the endearing compliments that paſſed between us. Felicia's cheeks were moiſtened with a tender teſtimony of her joy; I was compelled, by friendſhip, to leave my woman to ride alone, and to give them my company in their own coach, in which, in a kind of triumph, they carried me to the end of our journey.

WE ſoon arrived at the houſe, a large plain edifice, ſituated in the midſt of an earthly paradiſe, where I found an entertainment rather hoſpitable and friendly, than profuſe and magnificent. I was welcomed with the moſt obliging teſtimonies of joy, and as they concluded, that I muſt be weary with my journey, I was early conducted to my apartment, the moſt ſumptuous of any in the whole building, and though there is nothing like grandeur in the furniture, there is a neatneſs and elegance that at firſt engaged my attention: every thing is like the owner's mind, plain and beautiful. Such was the idea Felicia had given of me to her few ſelect friends, that, from the firſt moment, wherever I appeared I ſeemed to inſpire joy; their hearts were as open as their houſes to receive me, and all of them actually

ſtrive who moſt ſhall contribute to make my reſidence in this delightful place as agreeable as poſſible. But after all, you can't imagine, Madam, what a ruſtic creature this Felicia is grown; why, ſhe is ſuch a walker, I can't keep pace with her half the length of a ſmall field. I laugh at her activity, and mimic her country ſtride; while ſhe, with the greateſt good humour, ridicules my mincing ſtep, and endeavours to put me out of conceit with ſome little peculiarities, which ſhe calls affectation. Mr. Manly has, indeed, every perfection that my lovely friend has attributed to him: believe me, he has nothing of the ſwain, but ſimplicity, and an artleſs heart; nothing of the courtier, but the unaffected eaſe and freedom of his behaviour: and ſuch an eſteem I have already entertained for him, that I had rather hear him talk, than liſten to the compliments of the fineſt beau in chriſtendom. Nay more, I love him; love him as I ſhould my guardian angel, were I permitted to ſee his perſon, and hear his heavenly admonitions. If it ſhould pleaſe the director of all events to ſuffer me to be ſafely delivered of a boy, where ſhall I find a tutor like him? I would not, for the world, deny him the happineſs of being brought up with this ſon. Should I live to

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ſee the image of my dear deceaſed lord, growing up under his care, what a ſweet addition would it give to my reveries? with what pleaſing ſympathy ſhould Felicia and I behold the two prattling infants, daddling before us, through the garden, or the fields, while we, with hearts filled to the brim with maternal love, and ſocial friendſhip, walk ſlowly after, talking of refined delights, and raiſing our ſouls on the wings of heavenly affection and gratitude. The little cherubim, when lying on Felicia's lap, puts me in mind of the Venus and infant Cupid, I have ſo often admired in my uncle's cloſet. I need not tell you that he is a lovely boy, when I make uſe of this compariſon; a compariſon that would wrong him, if I did not add, that it only holds good while he ſleeps; for when awake his bright blue eyes deſtroy the reſemblance.

THE firſt viſit I paid was to Marilla, who is the ſame engaging creature that Felicia has always deſcribed her: ſhe has a good deal of learning, a great deal of fine ſenſe, and a vaſt deal of that tender humanity, that unlimited goodneſs of heart, which, uncircumſcribed by the ties of blood, or the diſtinctions of religion, graſps at the happineſs of every human creature. In this ſhe reſembles Lucius, to

whom

whom she is nearer allied by a kindred of soul than by all the ties of nature. He considers man as man, and himself as a citizen of the world; and they both regard the whole universe, however varied by the complexion of different regions, however distinguished by religions, customs, and manners, as having a reciprocal claim to benevolence, and the kindest acts of humanity. In this visit to Mr. Manly's, I was entertained with the same affection as if I too had been married into the family: Marilla received me with open arms, and the good lady, her mamma, expressed almost as much tenderness for me, as for Felicia, or her own daughter; while my friend, smiling at their caresses, seemed to set a higher value on them, than on those bestowed on herself. What a difference is there, Madam, between this frank behaviour, this unreserved freedom of mind, and all the low acts of disguise, the empty formalities, the modes and forms of greatness! The openness of their countenances made it impossible for me to be under the least restraint. In an hour's time, I was as free and intimate with every one of them as Felicia herself; I told them I knew all their affairs, and enquired of Marilla, whether she was yet inclined to admit the addresses of Felicia's

mother

cousin.

couſin. She reddened a little; but immediately replied, that was it poſſible for her to be in love with a vicious man, let his perſon and behaviour be ever ſo engaging, ſhe would never admit his addreſſes; ſince this would be to hazard both preſent and eternal happineſs; that, in this caſe, it would be her duty to do violence to her heart, and, by a glorious effort, endeavour to conquer herſelf: how then could ſhe ever think of being ſo nearly united to a man, whom, though ſhe would not deſpiſe, ſhe could never love!

BUT, ſaid Mr. Manly, with a ſmile, my daughter has another motive to refuſe him, which, notwithſtanding the extraordinary frankneſs of her temper, ſhe has had the art to conceal. A young clergyman, nearly related to Mr. Stevens, is lately returned into this part of the country, where he has obtained a ſmall living: but, though his circumſtances are but very indifferent, he has every other qualification that can recommend him to my daughter. He was laſt week accidentally in her company; and I am informed that ſhe has made a conqueſt, which ſhe cannot but approve; I had this information from Felicia's couſin, who makes a great merit of the diſcovery,

covery, and ſays, that though the clergyman deſpairs of ever obtaining her, and has declared, that he ſhall never have the preſumption to attempt it, yet, in his opinion, I ought to watch her cloſe, leſt ſhe ſhould be prevailed upon to throw herſelf away.

DURING this ſpeech, Marilla had a conſtraint and aukwardneſs in her air, which ſhewed her at a loſs how to behave: but ſhe was ſoon relieved by Felicia, who, after expreſſing ſome indignation againſt her couſin, aſked if the gentleman was not educated at Cambridge. Mr. Manly anſwered, that he heard ſo. On which ſhe told him, that ſhe had once the honour of his company with Mr. Stevens, Lucius, her aunt, and Amelia, in a viſit they paid at my † Lord M****'s; that ſhe was greatly pleaſed with his converſation, and believed him to be a gentleman of uncommon merit. It was eaſy to ſee, that Marilla did not hear this encomium with indifference, though ſhe had the preſence of mind inſtantly to change the ſubject.

MARILLA, who had yet, as ſhe told us afterwards, no more than a high opinion of the

† See Letter VIII.

the merit of this reverend gentleman, an esteem, which rather encreased than disturbed the tranquility of her mind, had soon a very favourable opportunity to see if it was worthily placed. She had no difficulties to encounter with; her father, and every one of the family were devoted to her happiness. Mr. Manly, disgusted with the follies of life, rejoiced at the prospect of disposing of his daughter, to a person of intrinsic worth; he only wanted to know, if his information was well founded, and this he easily accomplished. He invited Mr. Stevens and the clergyman to dine with him, and blotting out the name of the young esquire, shewed them the letter as a mean attempt to injure them in his esteem. The modest clergyman, struck with confusion, blushed, trembled, and confessed the truth; at the same time assuring him, with many protestations, that, though it was true, he loved Marilla, he never had the presumption to aspire to the least hope; and that, whatever had been the consequence, he had resolved never to mention it to her. But Mr. Manly interrupted him; by letting him know that he was not displeased, that he had a very great esteem for him, and though his daughter's

daughter's fortune would be now very conſiderable, the diſproportion could not be great, ſince he did not doubt, if virtue, piety, and good ſenſe would do, but that in time he would wear the mitre, and that, if he could gain his daughter's affection, he would be no obſtacle to their union.

You muſt not expect, Madam, that I ſhould here deſcribe his rapture, or tell the wiſe and ſilly things he ſaid, and did. He was, in a moment, raiſed from deſpair, almoſt to the poſſeſſion of his higheſt wiſhes: if then he did not behave at this inſtant like a madman, or a fool, I ſhould have no opinion either of his love, or his wiſdom. However, he was introduced to Marilla, who received him with the deference due to his merit: he ſaw her every day, and ſhe every day becoming more ſenſible of his value, in about ſix weeks time they were married.

THE young ſquire, though he had no great reaſon to hope, could not bear to loſe the poſſibility of obtaining her, much leſs to ſee her in the poſſeſſion of another; and, therefore, as if his reformation had been only a pretence, threw it aſide, as being now of no ſervice to him. He curſed her and himſelf, ſtormed like a madman, ſwore to abandon himſelf to

every

every vice, went out, and got ſo drunk, that he was obliged to be carried home, and the next day was ſeized with a fever, from which he recovered with difficulty. The idea of the immediate approach of death, filled his mind with horrors not to be expreſſed. Dreadful, indeed, were the conflicts of his deſpair, but theſe were at laſt removed, by prayer and penitential tears: and, indeed, this ſickneſs ſeems to have produced a real reformation. He is but juſt recovered, and may now live, and yet be no diſgrace to his family; he may have a juſt claim to the complacency of his friends, and may ariſe as high as his capacity will ſuffer him, to the degree of an honeſt huſband, perhaps, a plodding country 'ſquire, and a well-meaning juſtice of the quorum.

My whole attention is to contribute, by an eaſy chearfulneſs and good humour, to the ſatisfaction of a narrow circle of friends, and to furniſh freſh matter for their amuſement. It is their taſk to improve, mine only to divert. Marilla, who has not yet retired to her new habitation, graces our little ſociety more frequently than before her marriage, and with her comes the agreeable youth, who has the honour of her neareſt friendſhip. I want words to expreſs

preſs the height of their felicity; he, as well as Lucius and Felicia, is conſidered by Mr. and Mrs. Manly, as the pride of their little family; as their happineſs and glory. I hardly ever knew a man of finer ſenſe, or more generous ſentiments; I could not have imagined, that a perſon could be found, ſo nearly reſembling Lucius.

IT is now, Madam, that I begin to live, to know myſelf, and to know the human mind, which, in this place, appears ſtripped of every diſguiſe. True felicity dwells here; here is peace and joy. I taſte the delight of the moſt ſprightly and improving converſation, I read, I give a full ſcope to my reflections; and theſe employments alternately fill up my time. I ſometimes venture to walk out alone, and, wrapt in ſober contemplation, trace the hidden receſſes of my own heart.

WOULD you believe it? I am grown a very enthuſiaſt. I fall in raptures at the lovely face of nature. And were you to ſee me, when I walk in the garden, or the adjacent fields, or when, to enlarge the landſcape, I view from the turret, the wide proſpect ſtretching in a long level, till, reſembling a diſtant ſea, it mingles with the clouds; were you, in

theſe

theſe moments, to hear my rhapſodies, and be a witneſs of my extravagancies, even you, with all your partiality for me, would be tempted to think me mad.—But, perhaps, you are not far from thinking me ſo at preſent: however, it is beſt to conclude while I have room to aſſure you, that I have the honour to be

YOUR LADYSHIP'S

moſt ſincere friend

CHARLOTTE.

FINIS.


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